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YUMEKUI KENBUN

NIGHTMARE INSPECTOR

STORY AND ART BY SHIN MASHIBA

7

2009

YUMEKUI KENBUN

NIGHTMARE INSPECTOR

7

For those who suffer nightmares, help awaits at the Silver Star Tea House, where patrons can order much more than just Darjeeling. Hiruko is a special kind of private investigator. He's a dream eater. And he'll rid you of your darkest visions... *for a price.*

WORDS

Dreams on the menu in this volume: a treasure's whereabouts depicted in a manga, a destiny controlled by the roll of the die, a nursery rhyme that is more than just words, a neighbor whose walls keep crashing in, a dog being tormented, a girl who isn't sure of her true self, and a haunting photo that isn't what it seems.

ARE YOU AFRAID *YOUR* DREAMS MIGHT COME TRUE?

$9.99 USA $11.50 CAN

This book reads from right to left.

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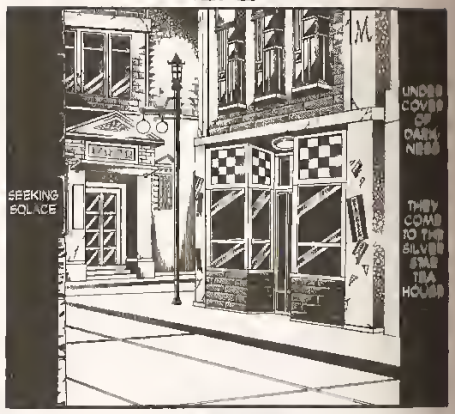
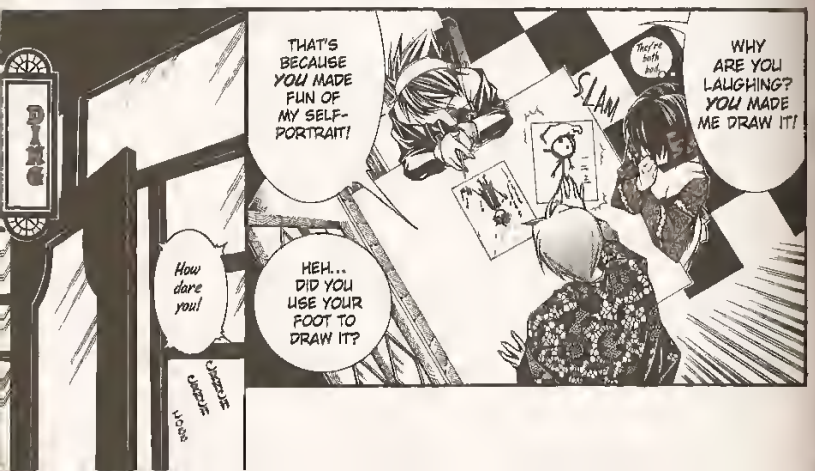
WORDS

THE FORTY-SECOND NIGHT: MANGA




DING
How dare you!
THAT'S BECAUSE YOU MADE FUN OF MY SELF-PORTRAIT!
HEH... DID YOU USE YOUR FOOT TO DRAW IT?
SLAM
They're both bad.
WHY ARE YOU LAUGHING? YOU MADE ME DRAW IT!

YUMEKUI KENBUN

NIGHTMARE INSPECTOR

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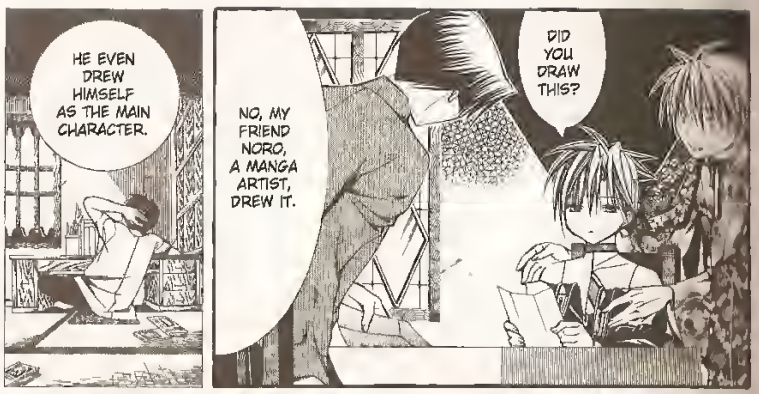
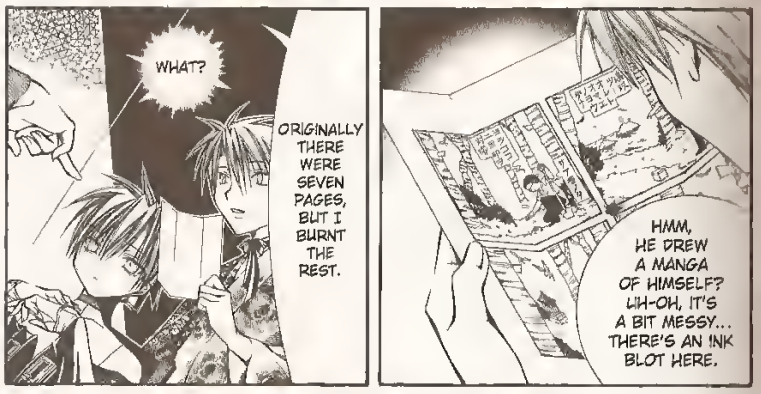
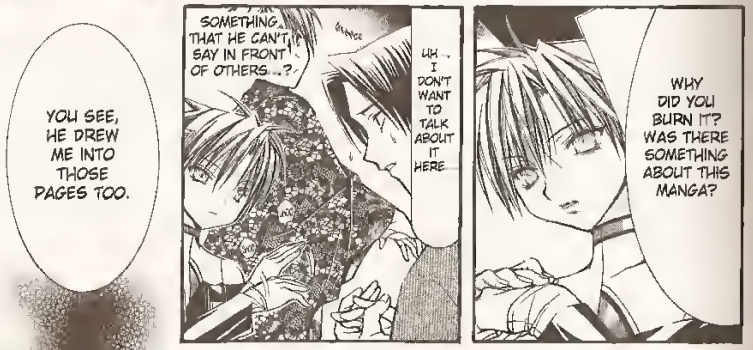
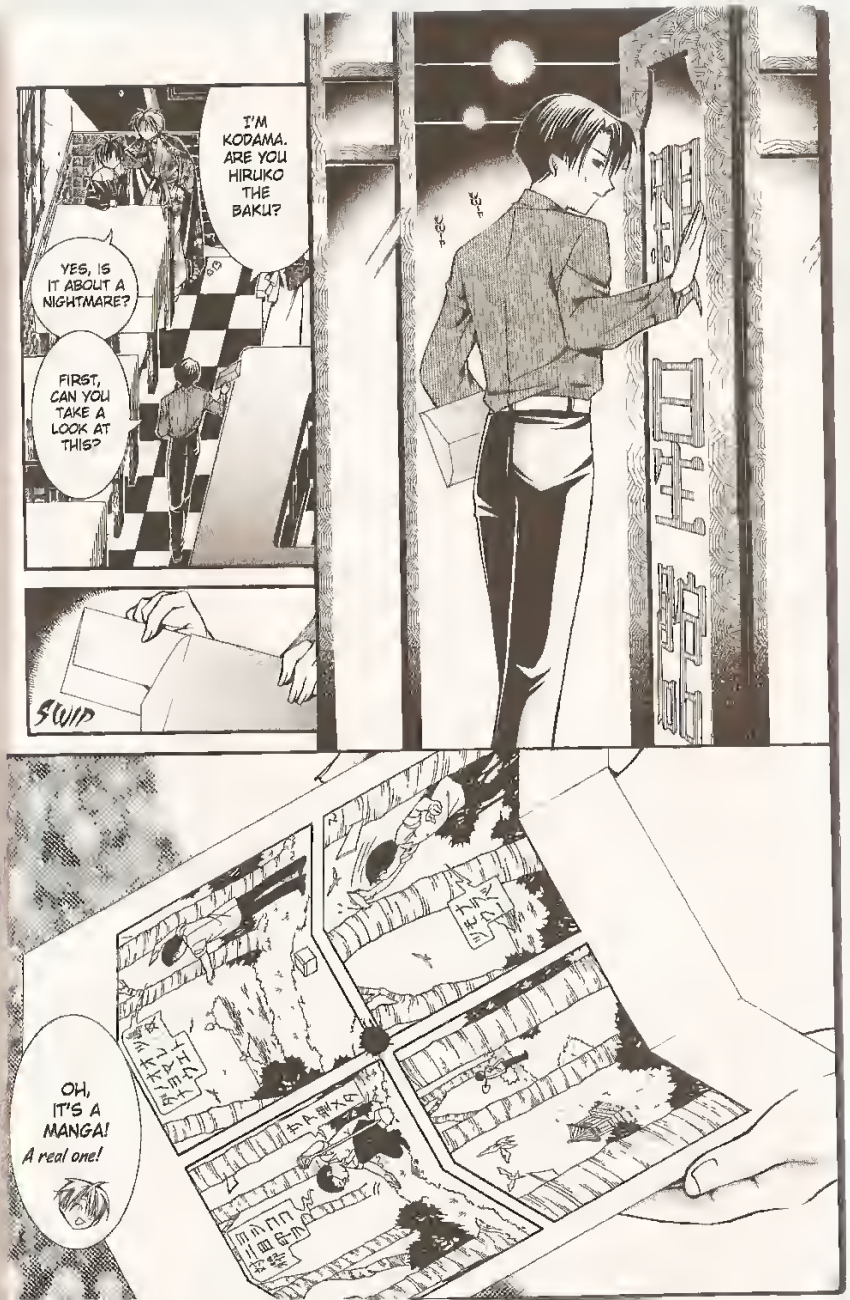
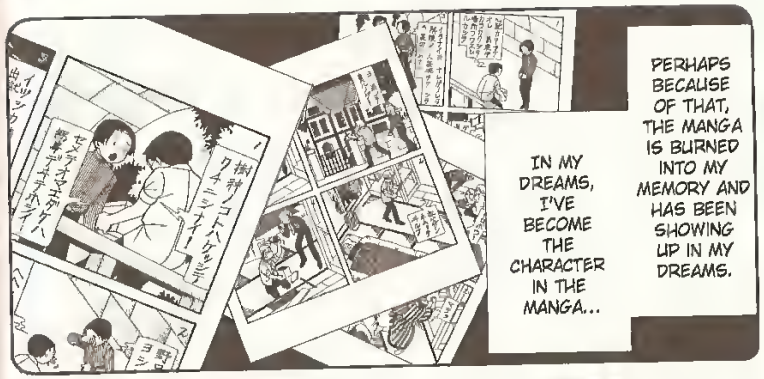

HE EVEN DREW HIMSELF AS THE MAIN CHARACTER.
NO, MY FRIEND NORO, A MANGA ARTIST, DREW IT.
DID YOU DRAW THIS?

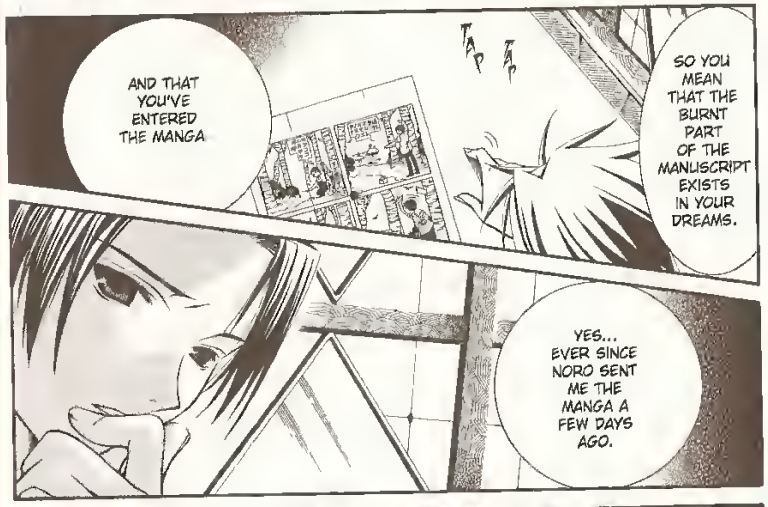

WHAT?
ORIGINALLY THERE WERE SEVEN PAGES, BUT I BURNT THE REST.
HMM, HE DREW A MANGA OF HIMSELF? UH-OH, IT'S A BIT MESSY... THERE'S AN INK BLOT HERE.


YOU SEE, HE DREW ME INTO THOSE PAGES TOO.
SOMETHING... THAT HE CAN'T SAY IN FRONT OF OTHERS...?
UH... I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT HERE.
WHY DID YOU BURN IT? WAS THERE SOMETHING ABOUT THIS MANGA?


I'M KODAMA. ARE YOU HIRUKO THE BAKU?
YES, IS IT ABOUT A NIGHTMARE?
FIRST, CAN YOU TAKE A LOOK AT THIS?
SWIP
OH, IT'S A MANGA! A real one!

SLEEP NOW
LEAVE THIS WORLD BEHIND


IN MY DREAMS, I'VE BECOME THE CHARACTER IN THE MANGA...
PERHAPS BECAUSE OF THAT, THE MANGA IS BURNED INTO MY MEMORY AND HAS BEEN SHOWING UP IN MY DREAMS.

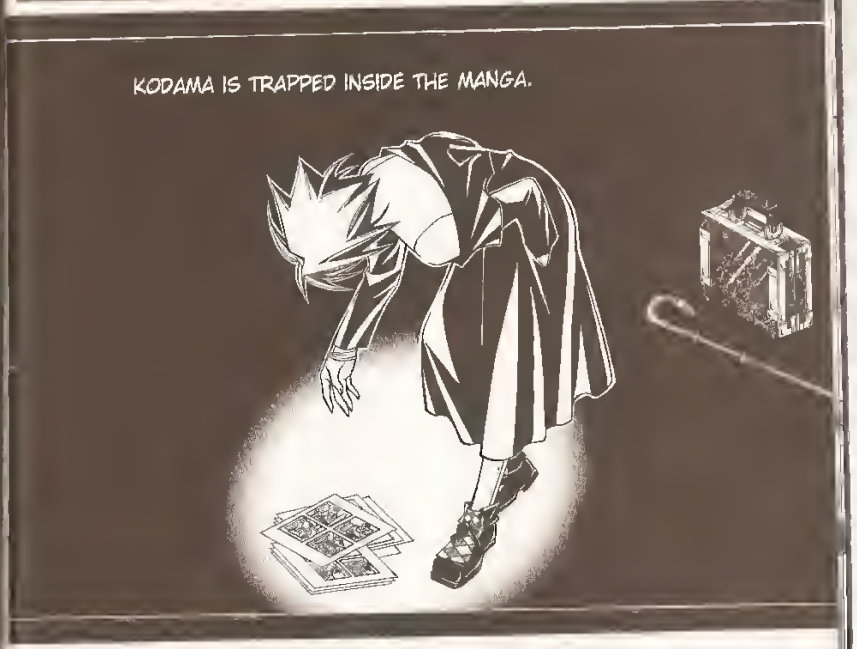

AND THAT YOU'VE ENTERED THE MANGA
TAP TAP
SO YOU MEAN THAT THE BURNT PART OF THE MANUSCRIPT EXISTS IN YOUR DREAMS.
YES... EVER SINCE NORO SENT ME THE MANGA A FEW DAYS AGO.

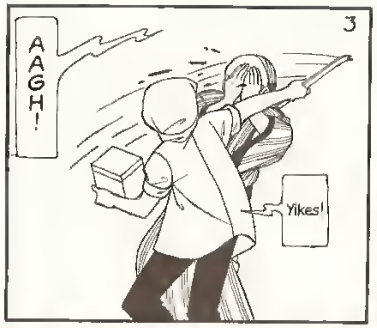
WELL, LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT THE DREAM.
THERE MUST BE SOMETHING IN THE MANGA THAT KODAMA WANTS TO FORGET BUT CAN'T.

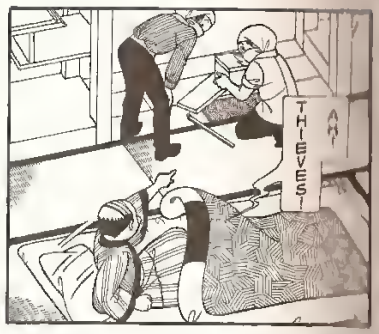
1
I wonder if there's a way to get out of this financial rut.
2
But he's a real miser. No one knows where he keeps all his valuables.
Your uncle is rich, isn't he?
3
A famous tea bowl.
Oh! Except one! A long time ago he took something out of its hiding place to show off.
4
He probably wasn't cautious 'cause you were a kid, eh? I wonder how much it's worth?
Hmm, who knows..

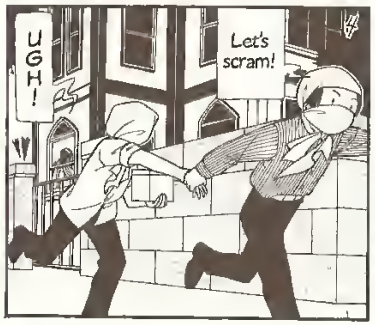
FLAP
HEH... SLACKERS.

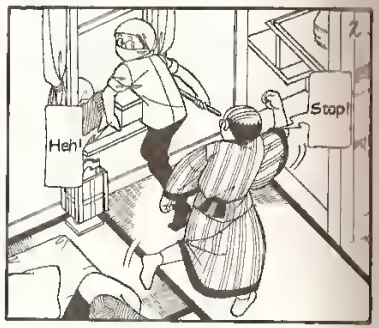
ONLY ABLE TO SAY THE SAME DIALOG AND DO THE SAME MOTIONS.
A LIMITED SPACE, ENCLOSED BY A FRAME.

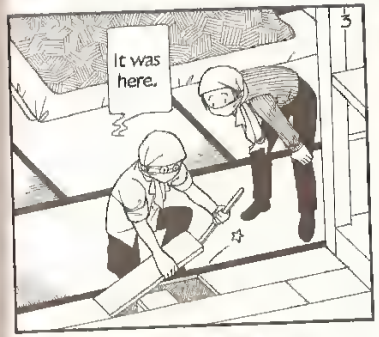

KODAMA IS TRAPPED INSIDE THE MANGA.


AAGH!
Yikes!


THIEVES!

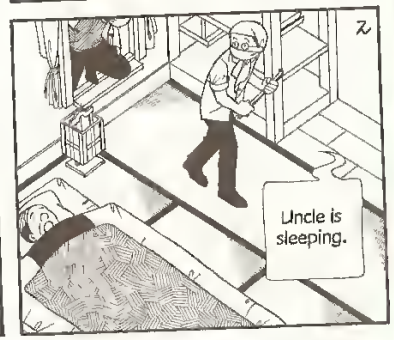

UGH!
Let's scram!


Heh!
Stop!

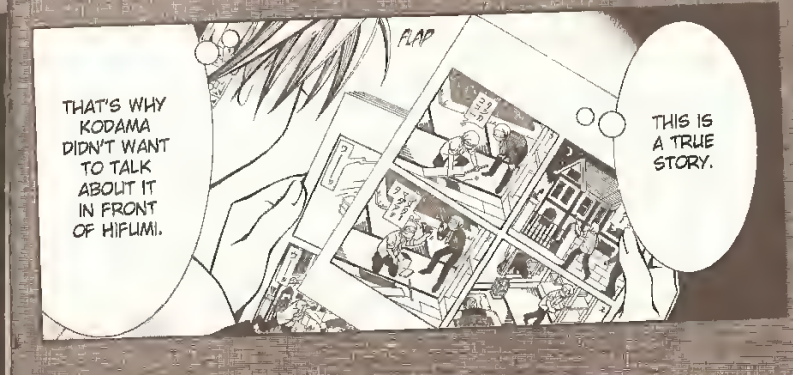

It was here.

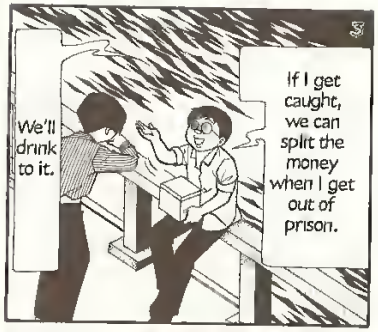
Let's steal it and then pawn it!

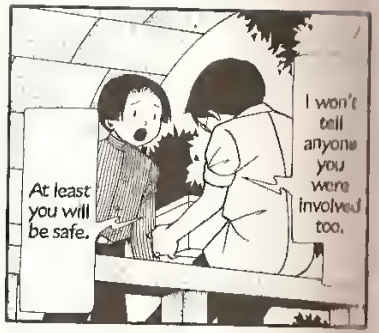
Got it! It was still here!


Uncle is sleeping.

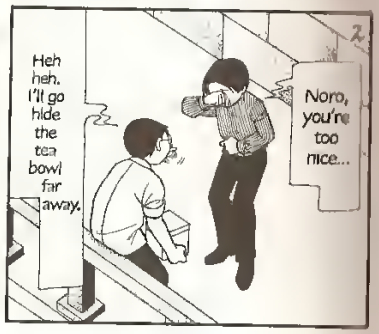
BUT WHY WOULD NORO DRAW IT IN THE FIRST PLACE?
I SEE... NO WONDER KODAMA BURNED THE MANGA.


THAT'S WHY KODAMA DIDN'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT IN FRONT OF HIFUMI.
FLAP
THIS IS A TRUE STORY.

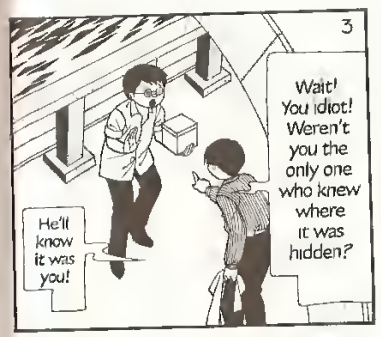

3
We'll drink to it.
If I get caught, we can split the money when I get out of prison.


1
At least you will be safe.
I won't tell anyone you were involved too.

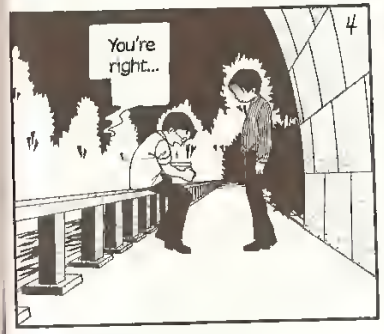
4
Until that day, don't forget me...


2
Heh heh. I'll go hide the tea bowl far away.
Noro, you're too nice...

NORO...

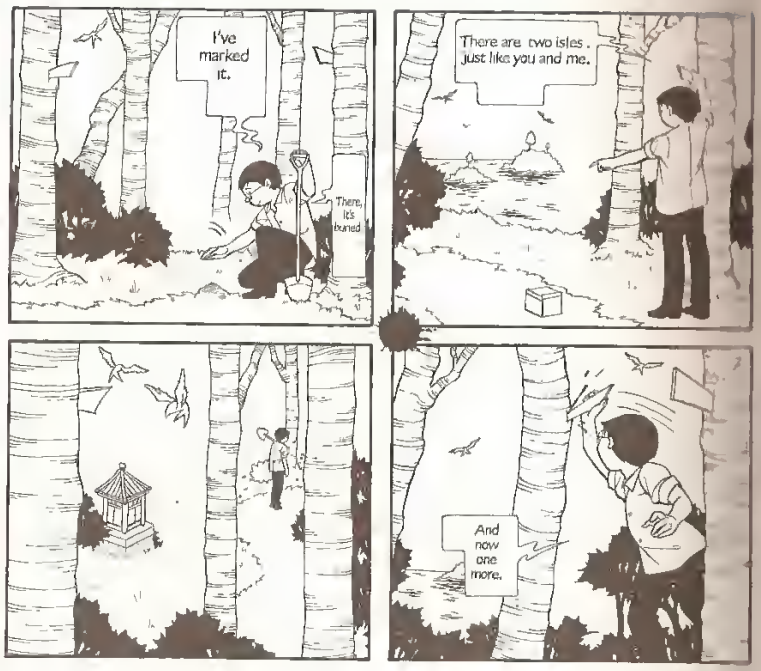

3
He'll know it was you!
Wait! You idiot! Weren't you the only one who knew where it was hidden?

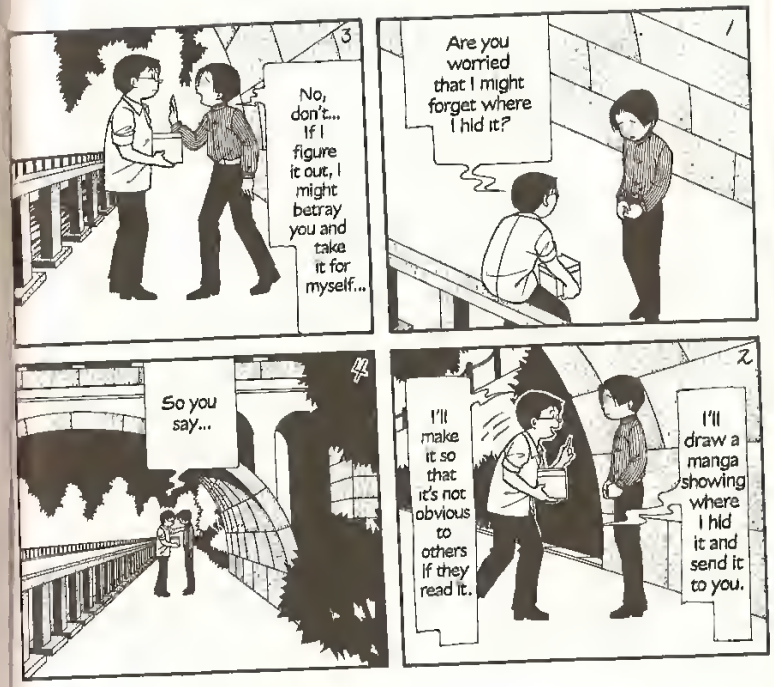
1
We got the tea bowl!


4
You're right...

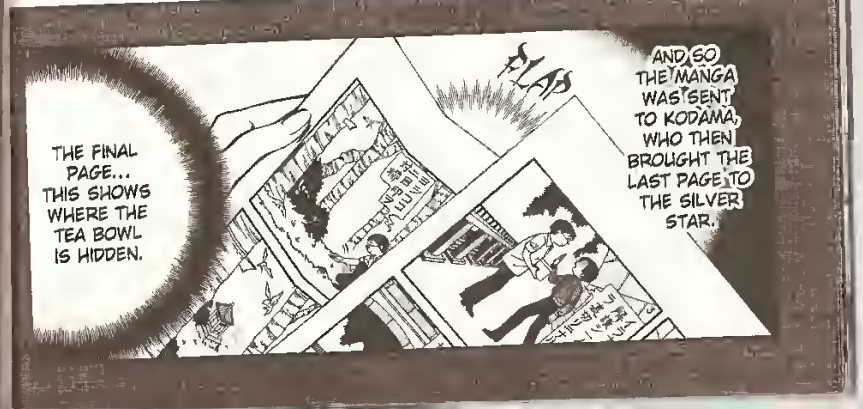
2
But Noro, you hurt your uncle.
He didn't see my face so it should be okay.

DID KODAMA ENCOURAGE NORO TO DO IT KNOWING THIS?
FLAP
THEY SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THIS WOULD HAPPEN


I've marked it.
There, it's buried
There are two isles, just like you and me.
And now one more.


3
No, don't... If I figure it out, I might betray you and take it for myself...
1
Are you worried that I might forget where I hid it?
4
So you say...
2
I'll make it so that it's not obvious to others if they read it.
I'll draw a manga showing where I hid it and send it to you.

SO KODAMA DIDN'T BURN THIS PAGE BECAUSE IT SHOWED WHERE IT WAS HIDDEN. BUT HE COULDN'T FIGURE IT OUT... AND AFTER TRYING SO HARD, HE BECAME TRAPPED IN THIS MANGA.
I SEE... THERE'S NO TELLING WHERE THESE ISLANDS ARE.

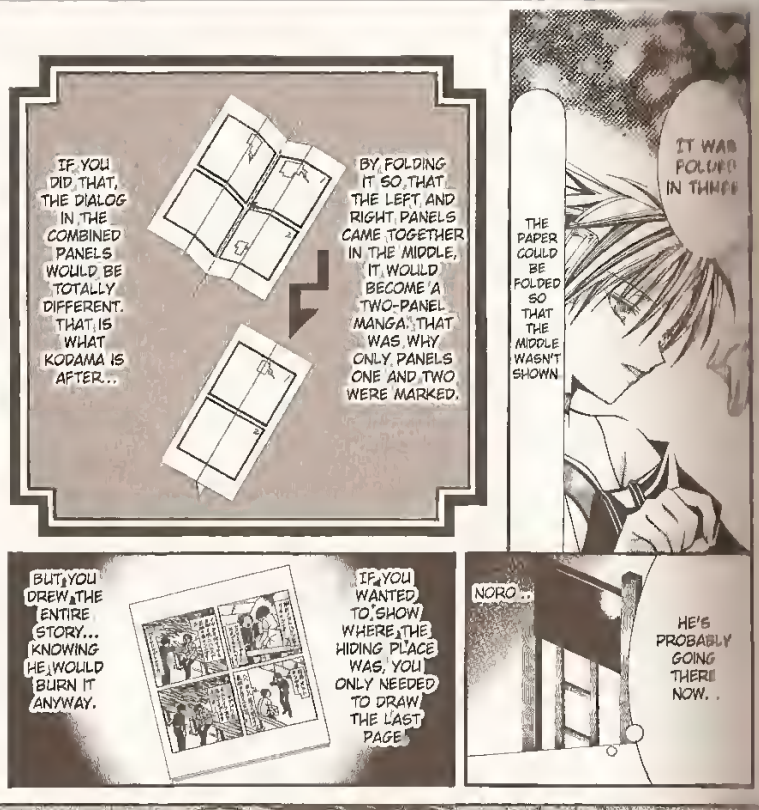

THE FINAL PAGE... THIS SHOWS WHERE THE TEA BOWL IS HIDDEN.
FLAP
AND SO THE MANGA WAS SENT TO KODAMA, WHO THEN BROUGHT THE LAST PAGE TO THE SILVER STAR.

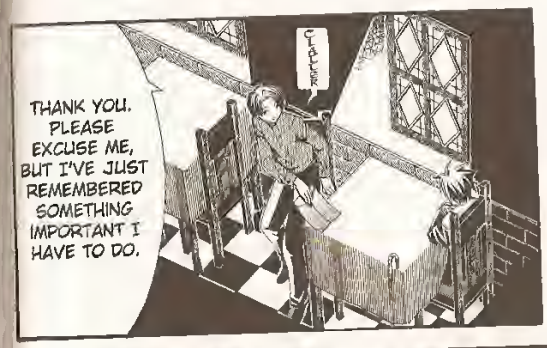
PHEW
HUH?
JUMP
POKE
AGH!
THESE TWO BALLOONS ARE THE SAME HEIGHT.

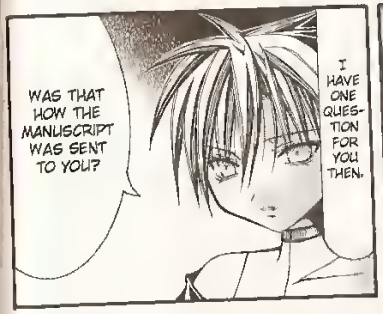
BUT, YOU WANTED ME TO WORK IT OUT FOR YOU, DIDN'T YOU?
DO YOU THINK I'M DESPICABLE?
I COULDN'T WORK IT OUT, NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRIED... AND THE MORE I COULDN'T FIGURE IT OUT, THE MORE IT HAUNTED ME. I DON'T CARE ABOUT THE TEA BOWL...
EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE PART OF THE MANGA, YOU MUST STILL BE ABLE TO UNDER-STAND.
ANSWER ME, KODAMA.
WILL YOU HELP ME?
THE PLACEMENT OF THE TWO ISLANDS AND THE SE HE DREW SHOULD BE A HINT.
HEH HEH... MAYBE IT'LL BE EASIER IF I GO INSIDE?
BUT IT'S NOT GOING TO BE EASY.
I HAVE NO REASON NOT TO.

NOW THAT I KNOW, I WON'T BE TR PPED BY THIS DREAM ANYMORE.
HIRUKO! THANKS TO YOU, I NOW KNOW WHERE THE BOWL IS!
THEN SINCE WE'RE ALL SQUARED AWAY HERE...
TIME TO WAKE UP.

AND THIS IS THE ONLY PAGE THAT ALL THE PANELS AREN'T NUMBERED.
THE PANELS ON THE REST OF THE PAGES WERE NUMBERED FROM ONE TO FOUR...
BALLOONS AT THE SAME HEIGHT... MISSING NUMBERS...
THE SAME HEIGHT ...
HMM? WHAT IF I WERE TO...
!
HA HA! I GET IT...!
I GET IT!

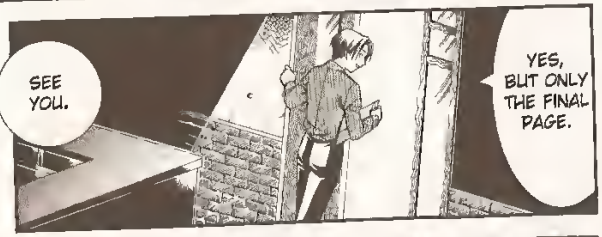

IF YOU DID THAT, THE DIALOG IN THE COMBINED PANELS WOULD BE TOTALLY DIFFERENT. THAT IS WHAT KODAMA IS AFTER...
BY FOLDING IT SO THAT THE LEFT AND RIGHT PANELS CAME TOGETHER IN THE MIDDLE, IT WOULD BECOME A TWO-PANEL MANGA. THAT WAS WHY ONLY PANELS ONE AND TWO WERE MARKED.
THE PAPER COULD BE FOLDED SO THAT THE MIDDLE WASN'T SHOWN.
IT WAS FOLDED IN THREE
BUT YOU DREW THE ENTIRE STORY... KNOWING HE WOULD BURN IT ANYWAY.
IF YOU WANTED TO SHOW WHERE THE HIDING PLACE WAS, YOU ONLY NEEDED TO DRAW THE LAST PAGE.
NORO...
HE'S PROBABLY GOING THERE NOW..
"I want us to be friends forever..."
...HOPED FOR THE BEST WHEN YOU ENTRUSTED THIS TO KODAMA.
"Don't betray me..."
YOU MUST HAVE...!!
BUT IT WAS ALL FOR NAUGHT...

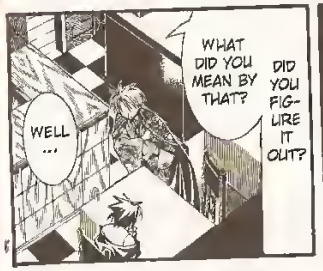

CLICK
THANK YOU. PLEASE EXCUSE ME, BUT I'VE JUST REMEMBERED SOMETHING IMPORTANT I HAVE TO DO.


WAS THAT HOW THE MANUSCRIPT WAS SENT TO YOU?
I HAVE ONE QUESTION FOR YOU THEN.

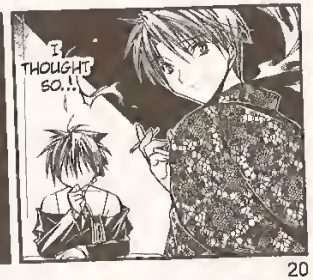
AND TO ADMIT TO THE THEFT...
ANOTHER THING, PLEASE DON'T TELL ANYONE ABOUT WHAT YOU SAW IN THE MANGA... I DON'T WANT NORA'S SACRIFICE TO BE IN VAIN.

DING


SEE YOU.
YES, BUT ONLY THE FINAL PAGE.

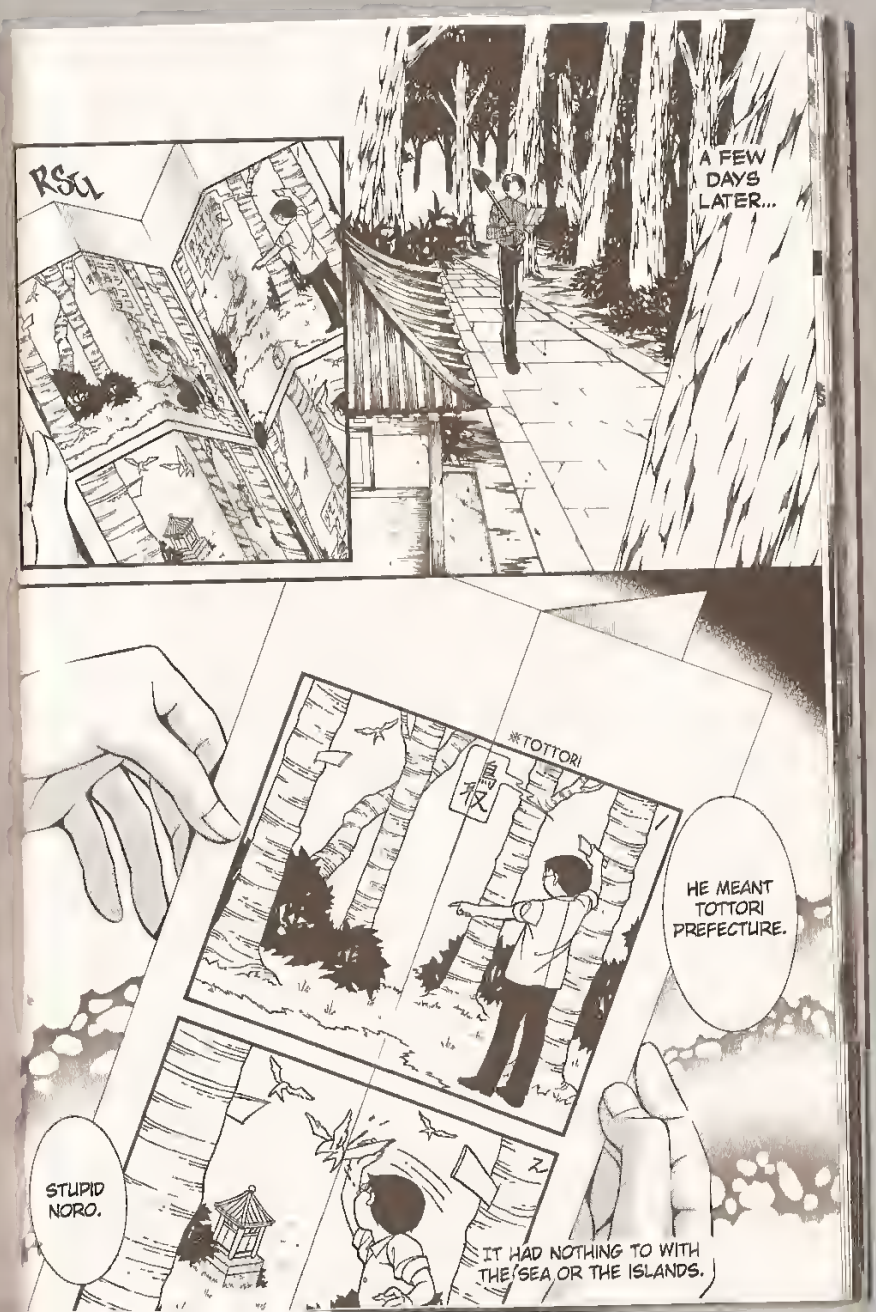

WELL...
WHAT DID YOU MEAN BY THAT?
DID YOU FIGURE IT OUT?

THEN THAT INKBLOT...


I THOUGHT SO..!

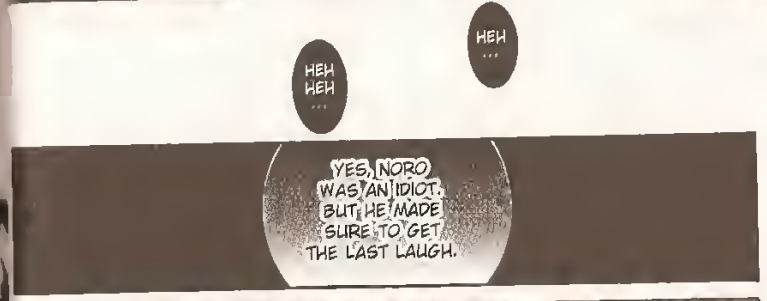
THE TEA BOWL IS HERE.
SWISH
HE HID IT SOMEWHERE THAT WE HAD BEEN TOGETHER.
YES, WE CAME HERE BEFORE...
NOT REALIZING THAT IT WAS ALL PART OF MY MASTER PLAN!
SO STUPID! THAT YOU'D TAKE ALL THE BLAME!
I LIKED THE WAY YOU WERE SO TRUSTING.

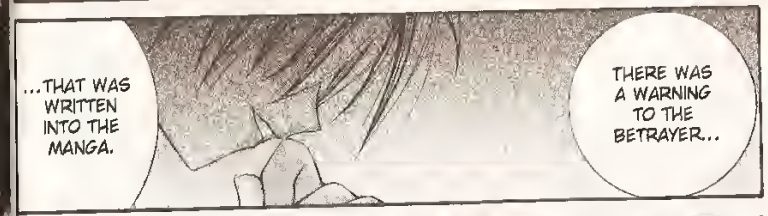
THE TEA BOWL IS BURIED BETWEEN THE TWO POINTS.
THIS IS THE SAME SCENERY AS THE MANGA!.. AND THE STAKES IN THE TREES ARE MARKING WHERE IT'S BURIED.

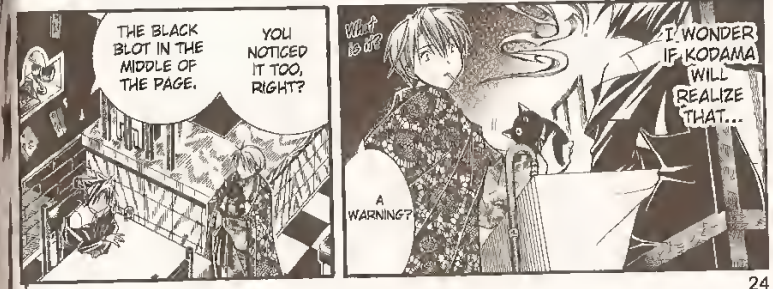

RSOL
A FEW DAYS LATER...
*TOTTORI
HE MEANT TOTTORI PREFECTURE.
STUPID NORO.
IT HAD NOTHING TO WITH THE SEA OR THE ISLANDS.

HE PUT IT THERE ON PURPOSE.
THAT WASN'T AN ACCIDENT.
IF YOU FOLD THE PAPER IN TOWARDS THE CENTER, WHAT HAPPENS TO THE BLOT?
HEH HEH... I THINK ABOUT IT AGAIN
IT DISAPPEARS.

AH, FINALLY...


HEH HEH...
HEH...
YES, NORO WAS AN IDIOT. BUT, HE MADE SURE TO GET THE LAST LAUGH.


...THAT WAS WRITTEN INTO THE MANGA.
THERE WAS A WARNING TO THE BETRAYER...


THE BLACK BLOT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PAGE.
YOU NOTICED IT TOO, RIGHT?
What is it?
I WONDER IF KODAMA WILL REALIZE THAT...
A WARNING?

The Forty-Third Night: Board Game

BUT HIS WHEREABOUTS... AND THE TRUE HIDING PLACE...

ONLY NORO KNOWS ...

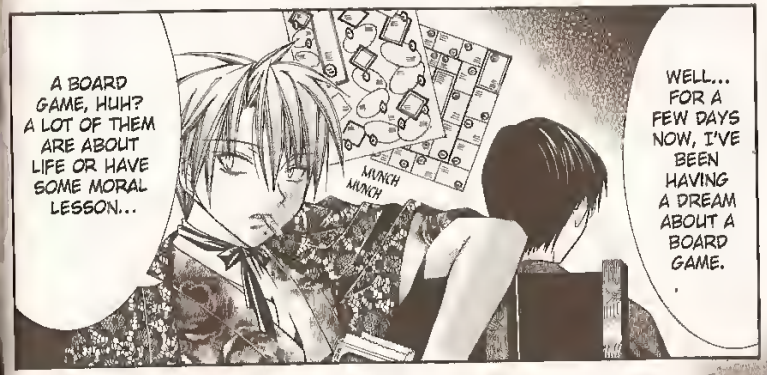
WITH NO ACCOMPLICE, THE TEA BOWL IS ALL NORO'S NOW!

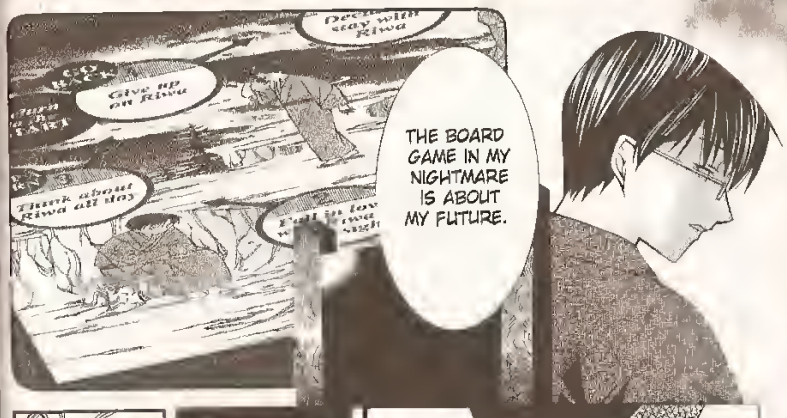
G-GOOD EVENING.
WHETHER

SEEKING SOLACE
UNDER COVER OF DARK NESS
THEY COME TO THE SILVER STAR TEA HOUSE

I HAVE SOMETHING THAT I'D LIKE TO ENTRUST TO YOU, THE BAKU.
I'M KIYOSHI MASAME.
ENTRUST? WHAT KIND OF NIGHTMARE IS IT?

SLEEP NOW... LEAVE THIS WORLD BEHIND.

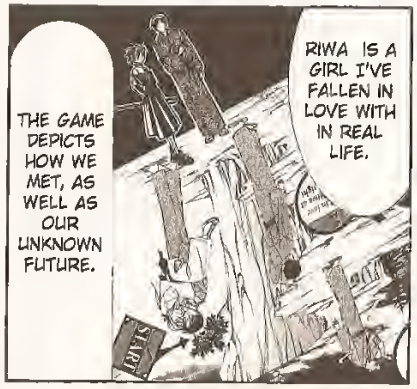

A BOARD GAME, HUH? A LOT OF THEM ARE ABOUT LIFE OR HAVE SOME MORAL LESSON...
MUNCH MUNCH
WELL... FOR A FEW DAYS NOW, I'VE BEEN HAVING A DREAM ABOUT A BOARD GAME.


Give up on Riwa
Think about Riwa all day
THE BOARD GAME IN MY NIGHTMARE IS ABOUT MY FUTURE.

WOOSH

I THINK I CAN GUESS WHAT YOU WANT TO ENTRUST ME WITH ANYWAY.

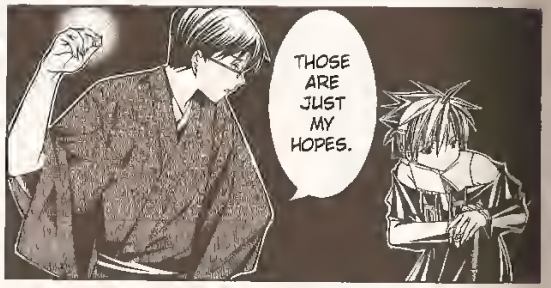
NO.
IT'D BE QUICKER IF I TAKE A LOOK AT IT.
DO YOU NEED MORE DETAILS?
GRABBER

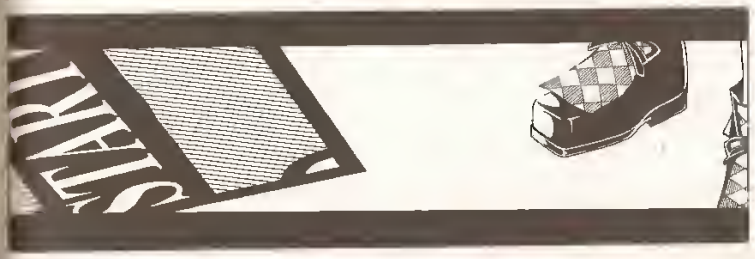

THE GAME DEPICTS HOW WE MET, AS WELL AS OUR UNKNOWN FUTURE.
RIWA IS A GIRL I'VE FALLEN IN LOVE WITH IN REAL LIFE.

WHO'S THE GIRL?
START
MY DREAM ALWAYS BEGINS AT THE START

IT LOOKS LIKE A HAPPY ENDING FROM THE OUTSET.
START
UNKNOWN? THEN WHY IS THERE THIS DRAWING AT THE BEGINNING? IT SEEMS PRETTY CLEAR HOW THE FUTURE WILL BE..

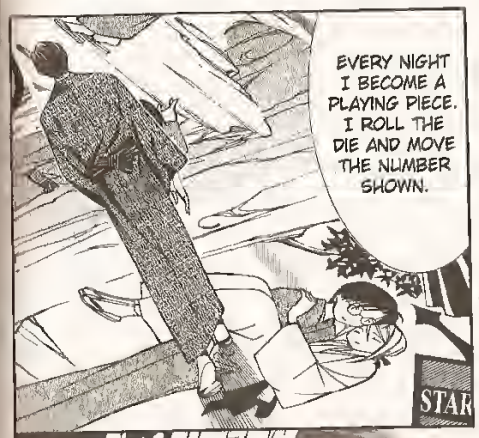
BUT IN MY NIGHT-MARE...


THOSE ARE JUST MY HOPES.

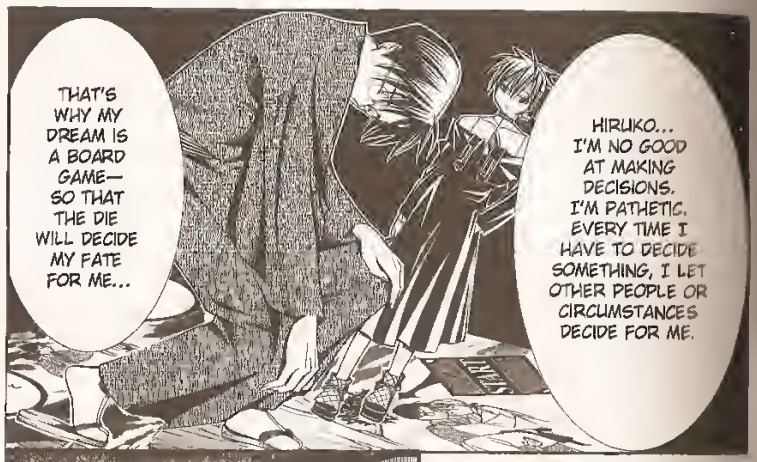

START

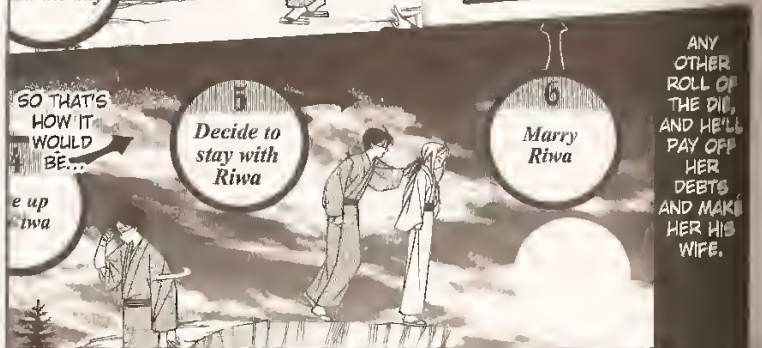
GO BACK
4
Return to the START
Give up on Riwa
5
Decide to stay with Riwa
6
Marry Riwa
SKIP A TURN
3
Think about Riwa all day
2
Fall in love with Riwa at first sight
START

...AND SAW HER.
I GLANCED UP AT THE CLIFF.
SHE STOLE MY HEART...
THE EVENING LIGHT ENVELOPED HER IN SORROW.
DON'T DO IT!
WHAT ARE YOU—?!
?!


EVERY NIGHT I BECOME A PLAYING PIECE. I ROLL THE DIE AND MOVE THE NUMBER SHOWN.
ROLL
STAR

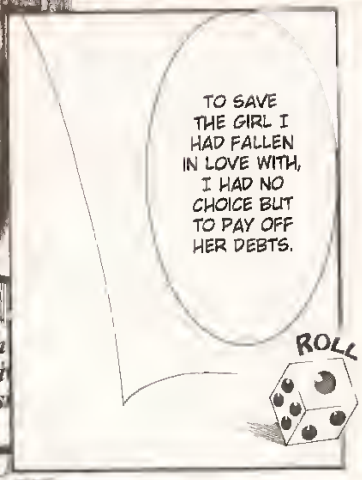
I STARTED SEEING THIS DREAM A FEW DAYS AGO. THAT DAY I HAD BEEN TAKING AN EVENING STROLL ALONG THE SHORE.
5
Decide to stay with Riwa
2
Fall in love with Riwa at first sight

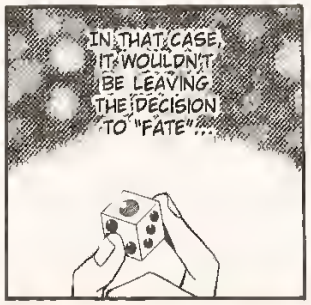

THAT'S WHY MY DREAM IS A BOARD GAME— SO THAT THE DIE WILL DECIDE MY FATE FOR ME...
HIRUKO... I'M NO GOOD AT MAKING DECISIONS. I'M PATHETIC. EVERY TIME I HAVE TO DECIDE SOMETHING, I LET OTHER PEOPLE OR CIRCUMSTANCES DECIDE FOR ME.

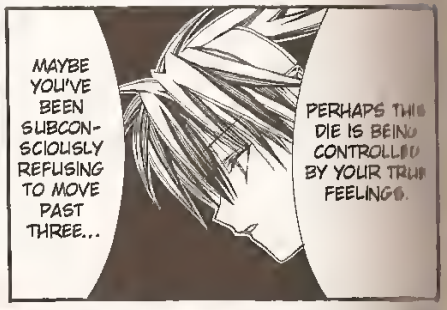

SO THAT'S HOW IT WOULD BE...
5
Decide to stay with Riwa
6
Marry Riwa
ANY OTHER ROLL OF THE DIE, AND HE'LL PAY OFF HER DEBTS AND MAKE HER HIS WIFE.

SHE WOULD GO TO THE CLIFF EVERY EVENING AT THE SAME TIME AND LAMENT HER FATE.

RIWA WAS GOING TO BE SOLD OFF TO PAY BACK HER PARENTS' DEBT.

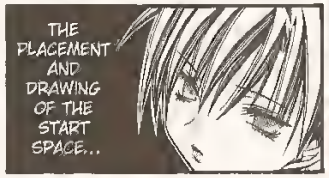



IN THAT CASE, IT WOULDN'T BE LEAVING THE DECISION TO "FATE"...

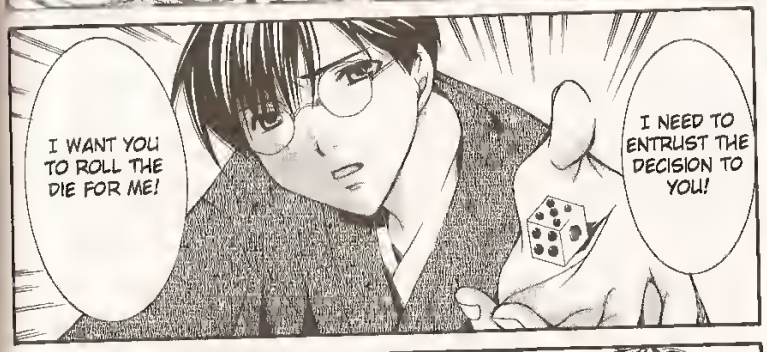

MAYBE YOU'VE BEEN SUBCONSCIOUSLY REFUSING TO MOVE PAST THREE...
PERHAPS THIS DIE IS BEING CONTROLLED BY YOUR TRUE FEELINGS.

Marry Riwa
START

MASAME, YOU'RE NOT AS INDECISIVE AS YOU SAY YOU ARE, ARE YOU?
NO... YOUR FEELINGS FOR RIWA...


THE PLACEMENT AND DRAWING OF THE START SPACE...

BUT RIWA MIGHT COMMIT SUICIDE AT ANY TIME SO HIRUKO...
BUT YOU COULDN'T DECIDE FOR YOURSELF, SO YOU'VE BEEN DREAMING EVERY NIGHT ABOUT WHAT TO DO.


I WANT YOU TO ROLL THE DIE FOR ME!
I NEED TO ENTRUST THE DECISION TO YOU!

NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, I'VE ONLY ROLLED ONES UP TO NOW.
!
DOES THAT DIE NOT ROLL HIGHER THAN A THREE?
THAT'S ODD.

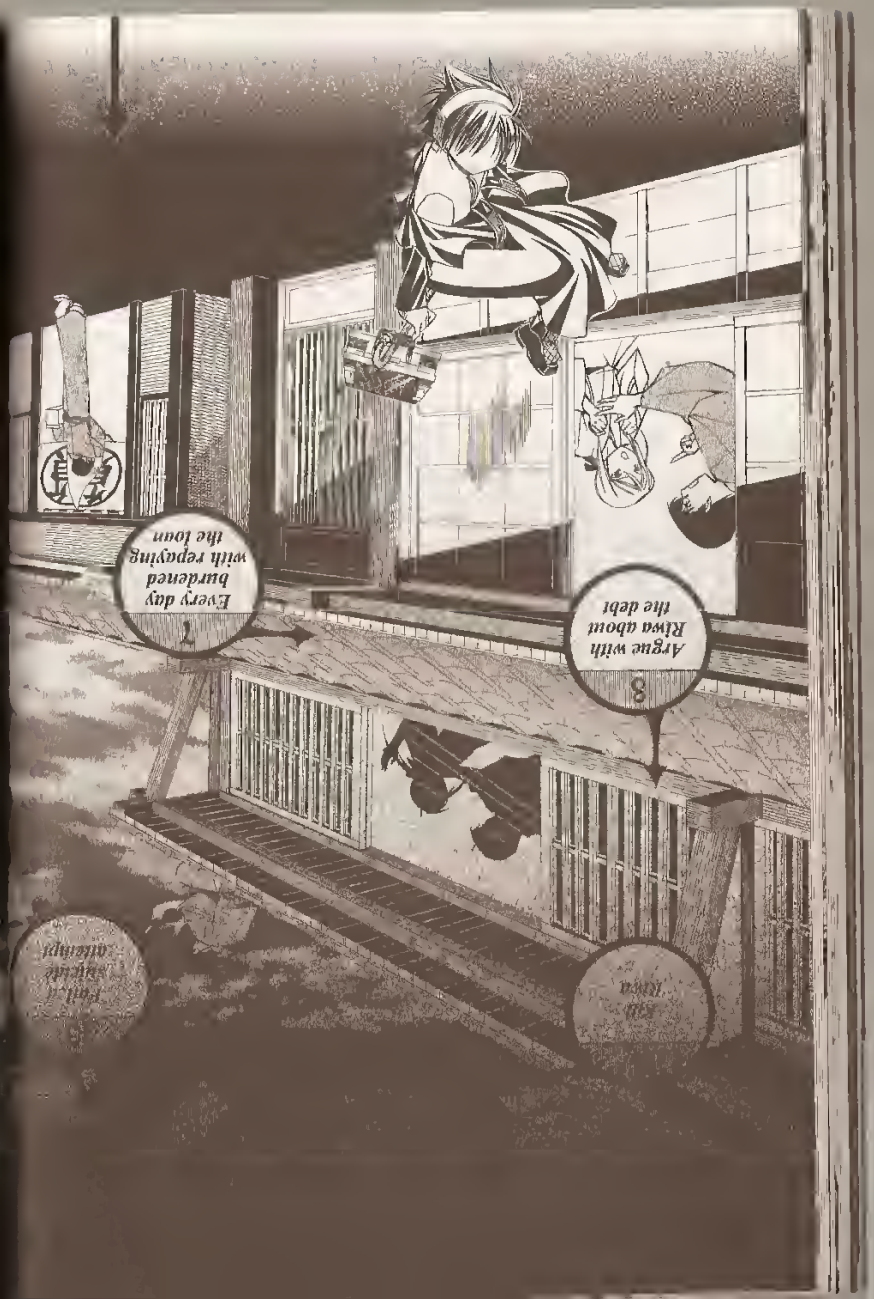
YOU...
I THOUGHT SO.

SKIP A TURN
3
Think about Riwa all day
HE'S NEVER GONE PAST SPACE THREE

Marry Riwa
Fall in love with Riwa at first sight
I think about Riwa all day
Love up on Riwa
Decide to stay with Riwa
Marry Riwa

THAT ARROW
Marry Riwa
I REALLY DO CARE FOR RIWA, BUT I...
Marry Riwa
Fall in love with Riwa at first sight
WHAT DOES THE REST OF THE GAME SHOW...?
THAT'S RIGHT. THERE'S MORE OF THIS GAME...
HIRUKO, I CAN'T MOVE BECAUSE I'M THE PLAYING PIECE.
WILL YOU GO LOOK FOR ME?
Give up on Riwa
I think about Riwa all day
Fall in love with Riwa at first sight

8
Argue with Riwa about the debt
7
Every day burdened with repaying the loan
10
Failed suicide attempt
9
Kill Riwa
Spend the rest of your life in misery with nothing left but the loan
11
THE END


8
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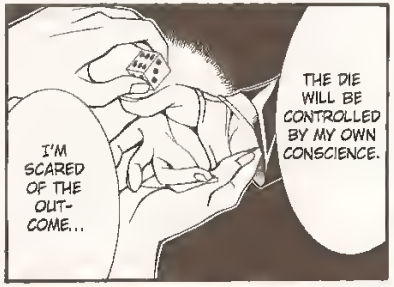
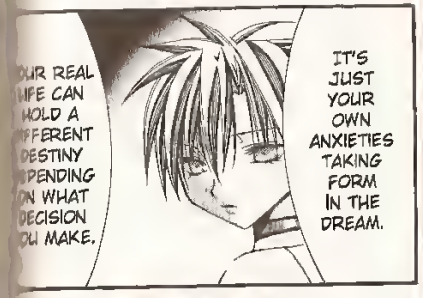
Failed suicide attempt

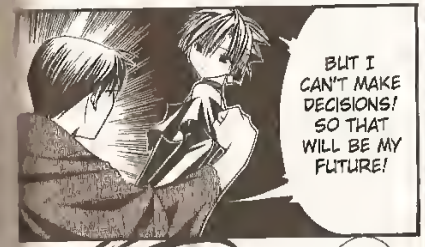


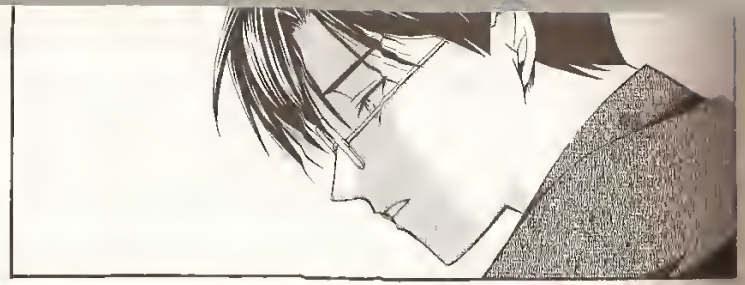
RIWA IS ALWAYS THERE IN THE EVENING.

IF IT'S ANYTHING ELSE, I WILL TAKE HER HAND AND WE'LL WALK THAT ROAD OF HARDSHIP TOGETHER ...

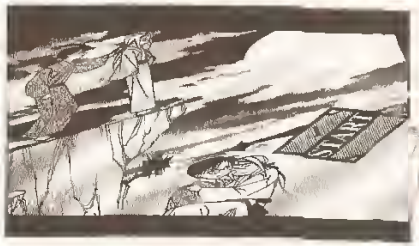
IF IT'S A ONE, THEN I'LL SAY GOOD-BYE TO HER AT THE CLIFF ...



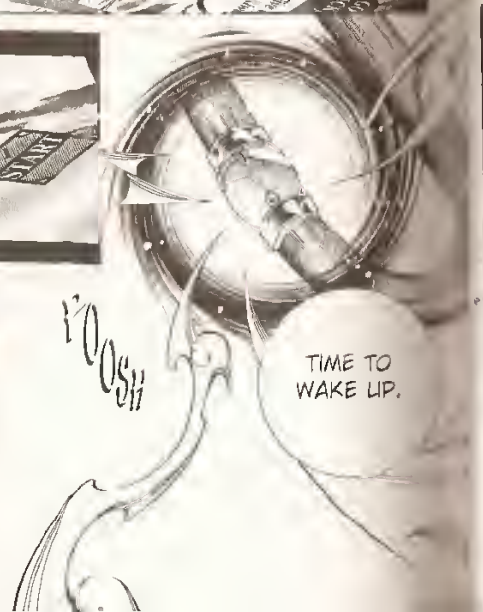




I'LL STICK TO IT.



Marry Riwa

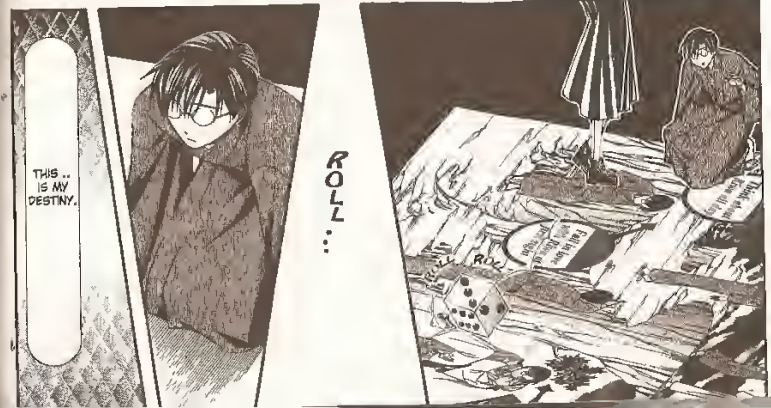

TIME TO WAKE UP.
YOOSH

KNOWING THAT THE FUTURE IS SO BLEAK, YOU'VE DECIDED TO FOLLOW WHATEVER THE DIE SHOWS.

HEH

BUT YOU HAVE DECIDED

AH! HOW NONCHALANT OF YOU!
TOSS


THIS .. IS MY DESTINY.
ROLL...

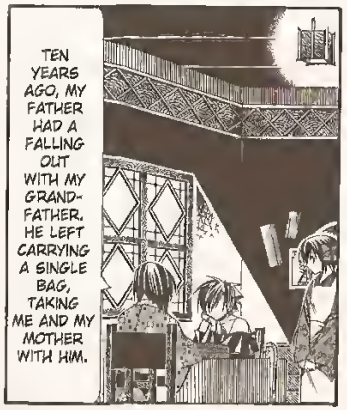
THIS ...
IS THE ROAD I AM TO FOLLOW.
I'LL GIVE UP ON RIWA AND RETURN TO THE START.
SKIP A TURN
Think about all day
Return to the START
Give up on Riwa
GO BACK

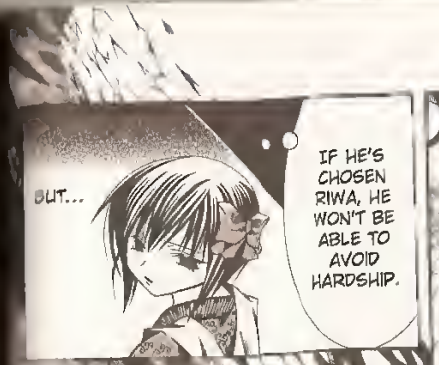
I DON'T HAVE THE MEANS TO SUPPORT HER, SO NOTHING CAN BE DONE ANYWAY...

A FEW DAYS LATER...
WHAT IN THE WORLD?!
WHY ARE YOU TWO TOGETHER?!
I THOUGHT THAT YOU DECIDED TO GIVE UP ON RIWA AND GO BACK TO THE START...
?
THE PROBLEM WAS WITH THE WORD "START"...
DO YOU MEAN YOU WENT BACK TO THE START AND WENT AROUND THE GAME AGAIN?

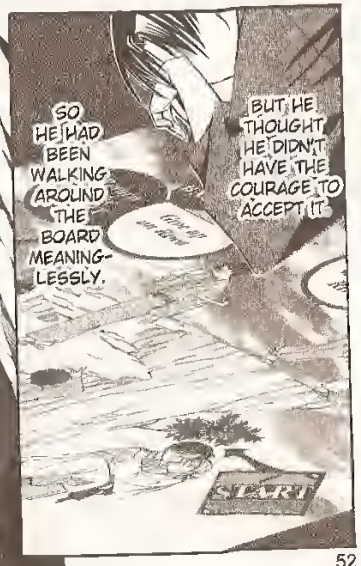
BUT AS YOU SEE...
IF I HAD FOLLOWED WHAT THE DIE HAD DECIDED FOR ME, I WOULD HAVE WATCHED HER DIE...
SO NOW I WANT TO SUPPORT HIM...
THE TREES ON THE SIDE OF THE CLIFF BROKE MY FALL.
HE COULD HAVE DONE NOTHING. BUT INSTEAD HE RISKED HIS LIFE TO CATCH ME.
YOU WERE GOING TO BE TOGETHER.
SO WHATEVER THE ROLL OF THE DIE WAS, THE RESULT WOULD HAVE BEEN THE SAME.
OH MY...

The Forty-Fourth Night: Words

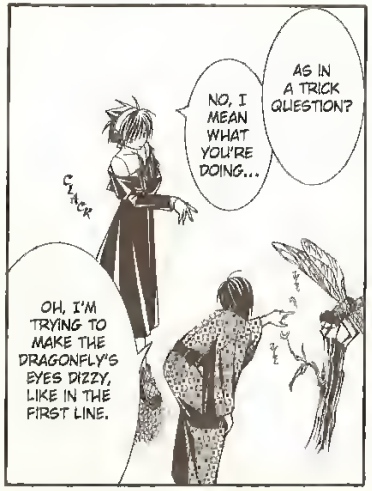

TEN YEARS AGO, MY FATHER HAD A FALLING OUT WITH MY GRAND-FATHER. HE LEFT CARRYING A SINGLE BAG, TAKING ME AND MY MOTHER WITH HIM.

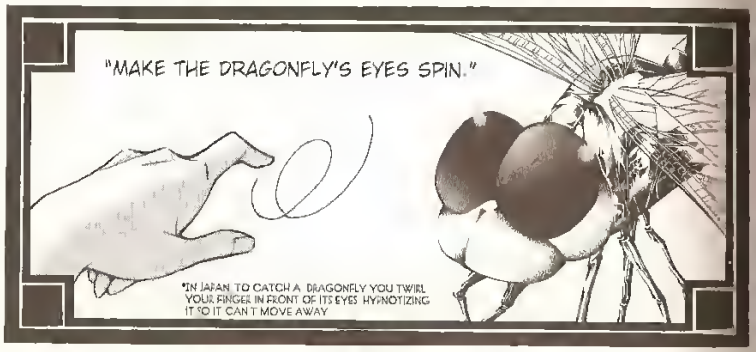


MASAME HAD ALREADY MADE HIS DECISION WITHOUT KNOWING IT.
GOING BACK TO THE START PLACED YOU BELOW RIWA. THE PICTURE HAD BOTH OF YOU THERE TOGETHER.
START



I'D LIKE YOU TO HELP ME FIND OUT IF THERE IS ANY MEANING TO THESE WORDS.
HOW BOTHER-SOME, BUT I'LL DO IT.
SLEEP NOW... LEAVE THIS WORLD BEHIND.
SHOOSH
SO WHAT IS YOUR NIGHTMARE?
OH MY...
ACTUALLY IT'S ABOUT SOMETHING MY FATHER SAID TO ME.
BUT MY MOTHER DIED SOON AFTER, AND A FEW DAYS AGO MY FATHER ALSO PASSED ON...
WHEN THIS NEWS REACHED MY FATHER'S FAMILY, MY UNCLE SENT A LETTER SAYING THAT HE WOULD TAKE ME IN. SO TOMORROW I'LL GO...
MAYBE IT WAS A LULLABY... OR PERHAPS A STORY WITH NO MEANING...
SINCE I WAS YOUNG, MY FATHER WOULD OFTEN WHISPER THESE STRANGE WORDS TO ME.
AND I STARTED HAVING THIS DREAM WHERE THE WORDS TAKE FORM.
BUT WITH MY FATHER DEAD, I HAVE NO WAY OF FINDING OUT THE TRUE MEANING OF THOSE WORDS.


AS IN A TRICK QUESTION?
NO, I MEAN WHAT YOU'RE DOING...
CLACK
OH, I'M TRYING TO MAKE THE DRAGONFLY'S EYES DIZZY, LIKE IN THE FIRST LINE.


"MAKE THE DRAGONFLY'S EYES SPIN."
*IN JAPAN, TO CATCH A DRAGONFLY YOU TWIRL YOUR FINGER IN FRONT OF ITS EYES HYPNOTIZING IT SO IT CAN'T MOVE AWAY

MAKE THE DRAGONFLY'S EYES SPIN
ENTER THE BAMBOO FOREST
SINK THE SUN IN THE WATER
THE FISH LOOKS UP AT THE SKY
THE FROG IS WAITING TO MOVE.

HAVE YOUR PARTNER GO IN
TAKE A LOOK AROUND AND PUSH THE CIRCLE DOWN
RETURN AND CHASE THE DRAGONFLY.

I FEEL THAT I'VE SEEN THAT SOMEWHERE BEFORE...
YOU KNOW..
PERHAPS THE TRUTH IS IN MY MEMORY, AND IT WILL BECOME CLEAR TO ME...
I DON'T TOTALLY UNDERSTAND, BUT IT SEEMS IF WE FOLLOW THE VERSE PROPERLY...
...THEN I THINK WE'LL UNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF THE WORDS.

WHY DON'T WE DO THIS?
BUT, NOTHING'S HAPPENING...
YES, I KNOW... I'VE BEEN DOING THIS EVERY NIGHT WITH NO SUCCESS.
SO NAIVE.
YOU KNOW, SINCE THIS DRAGONFLY IS PRETTY BIG...
AGH!!
THAT PROVES THAT WE WERE CORRECT.
SEE. THE WOODS HAVE APPEARED. WE CAN GO ON TO THE NEXT LINE.

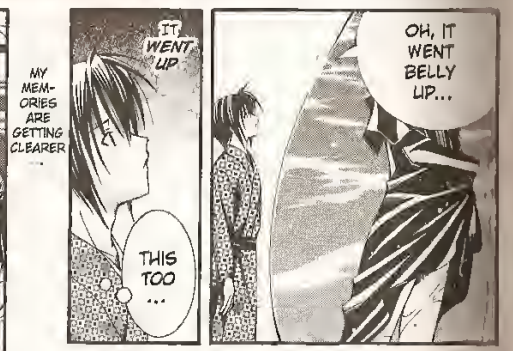
ZSSHH
SOUTH
GRIP
SO THAT'S IT...
NORTH
WEST
EAST
SOUTH
I SEE! THE SUN RISES IN THE EAST AND SINKS IN THE WEST!
AND FROM THE SOUTH MARK WE KNOW TO MOVE IT TO THE LEFT FOR WEST.
AH, LET'S MOVE ON TO THE NEXT LINE.
MOVE IT...

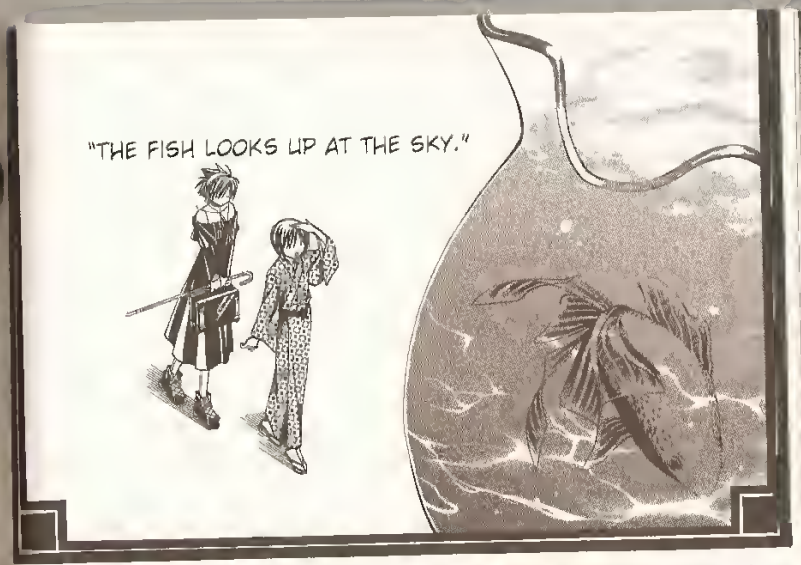
I'VE SEEN THIS BEFORE TOO...

"ENTER THE BAMBOO FOREST. SINK THE SUN IN THE WATER."
PLUP
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE. YOU CAN'T SUBMERGE THE REFLECTION OF THE SUN.
...
WHICH MEANS, IT ONLY EXISTS IN THE WATER.
SOUTH
THERE'S NO SUN IN THE SKY
HMM.

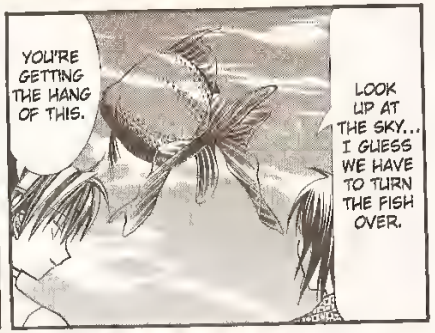
HE KILLED IT?
FLOAT

AH, ON TO THE NEXT LINE.


MY MEMORIES ARE GETTING CLEARER...
IT WENT UP
THIS TOO...
OH, IT WENT BELLY UP...


"THE FISH LOOKS UP AT THE SKY."

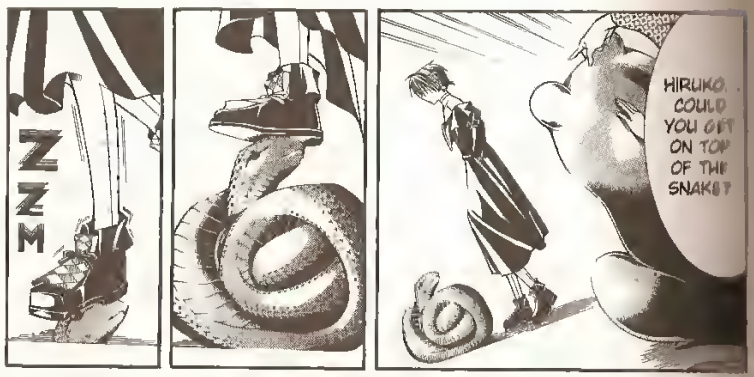
SO HOW DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD DO IT?

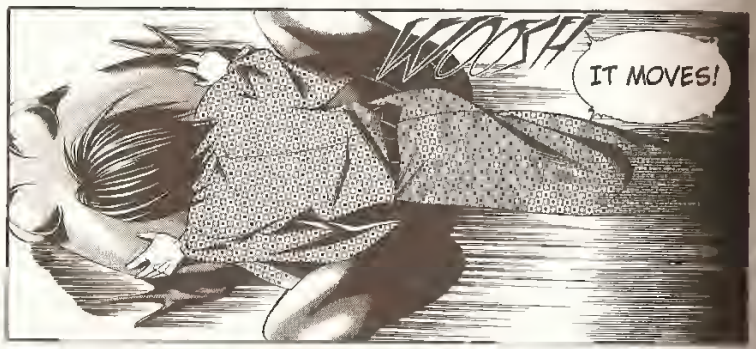

YOU'RE GETTING THE HANG OF THIS.
LOOK UP AT THE SKY... I GUESS WE HAVE TO TURN THE FISH OVER.

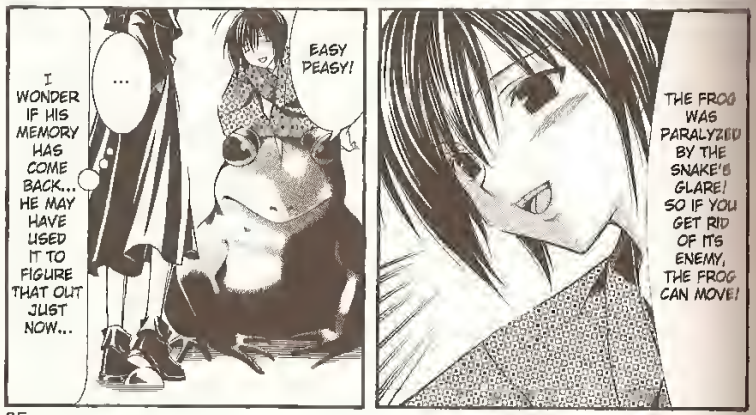
IT'S EASY.

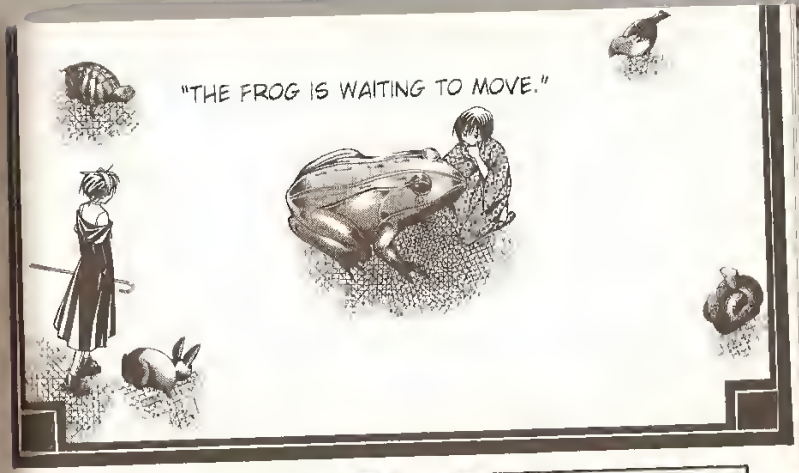
OR WE USE A STICK.
NO, USE BAIT...

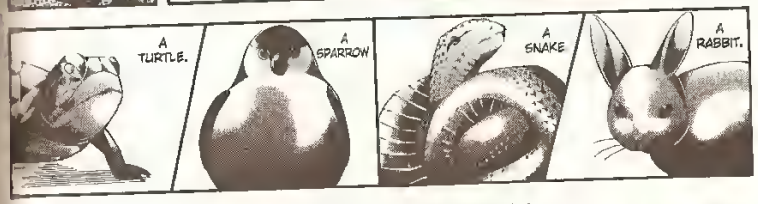
WE COULD HOLD IT AND...
NO, IT'LL STRUGGLE.



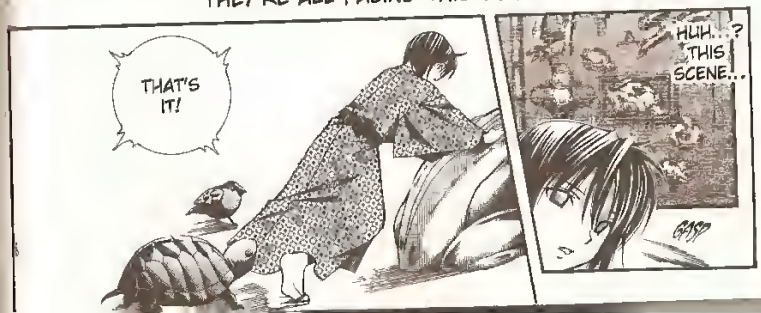



I WONDER IF HIS MEMORY HAS COME BACK... HE MAY HAVE USED IT TO FIGURE THAT OUT JUST NOW...
...
EASY PEASY!
THE FROG WAS PARALYZED BY THE SNAKE'S GLARE! SO IF YOU GET RID OF ITS ENEMY, THE FROG CAN MOVE!

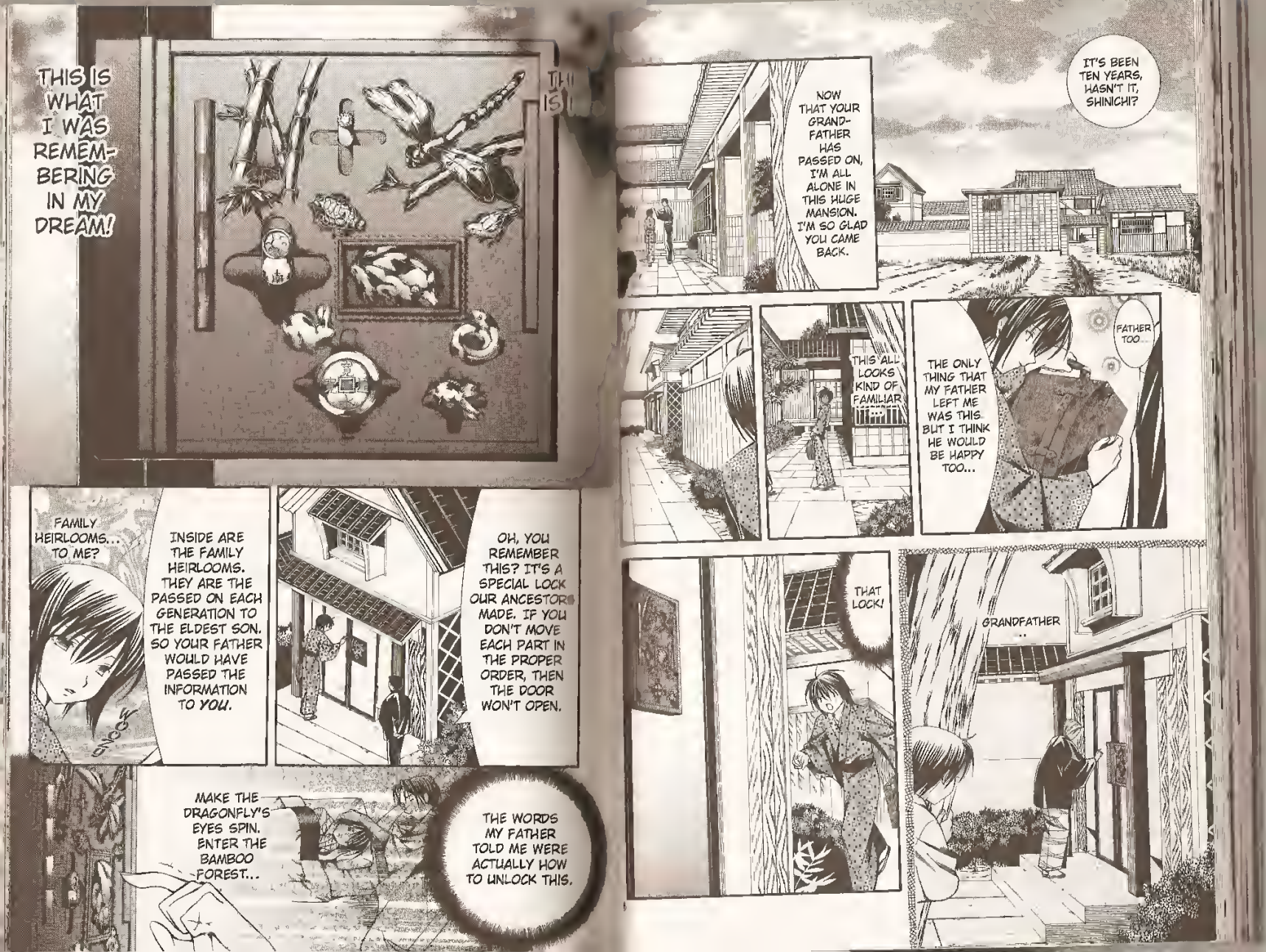




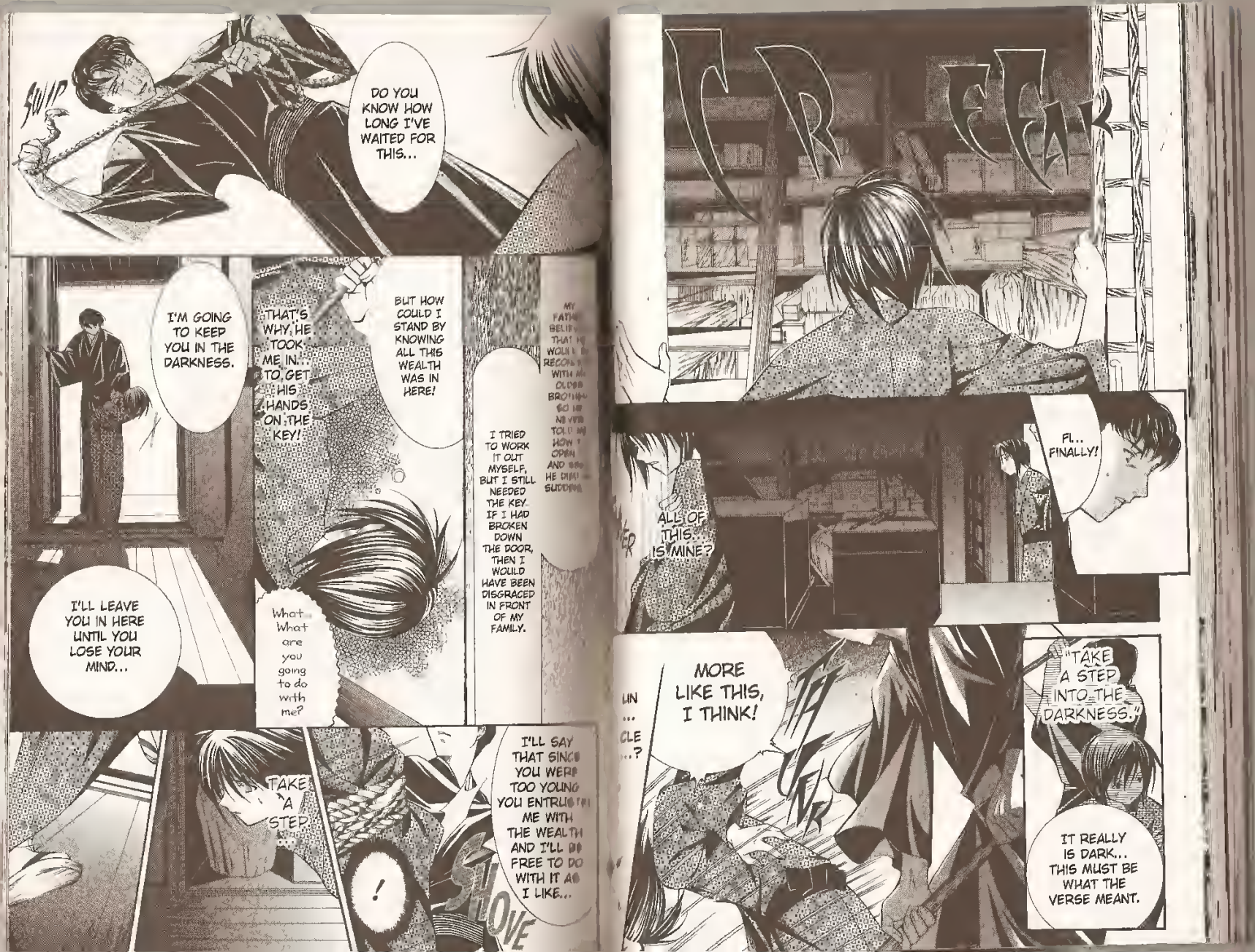
THEY'RE ALL FACING THIS WAY.



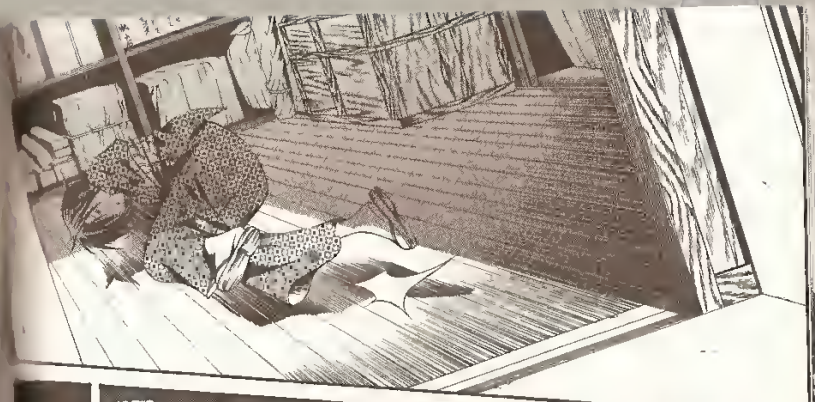
THE VERSE DOESN'T GO BACK TO THE DRAGONFLY. THERE IS MORE TO IT...
WELL... IT'S NOTHING TO DO WITH ME NOW.
THERE'S MORE? THAT SCARED HIM...?
I WAS SCARED AND TRIED TO FORGET IT...
TIME TO WAKE UP.
I KNEW IT! THERE WAS NO MENTION OF A HOLE BUT A HOLE APPEARED. AND THOSE ANIMALS... THEY APPEARED IN THIS DREAM EVEN THOUGH THEY WEREN'T IN THE VERSE.
"HAVE YOUR PARTNER GO IN
TAKE A LOOK AROUND AND PUSH THE CIRCLE DOWN
RETURN AND CHASE THE DRAGONFLY."
!
WHAT WAS THE FINAL HALF OF THE RHYME AGAIN?
IT'S A HOLE.
WHICH MEANS...
THE MEANING OF YOUR FATHER'S WORDS?
DO YOU UNDERSTAND NOW?
I REMEMBER SOMETHING ELSE TOO
BECAUSE MY PARTNER ISN'T HERE.
YES... BUT EVEN IF I WANT TO GO FORWARD NOW...
I DON'T THINK I CAN.

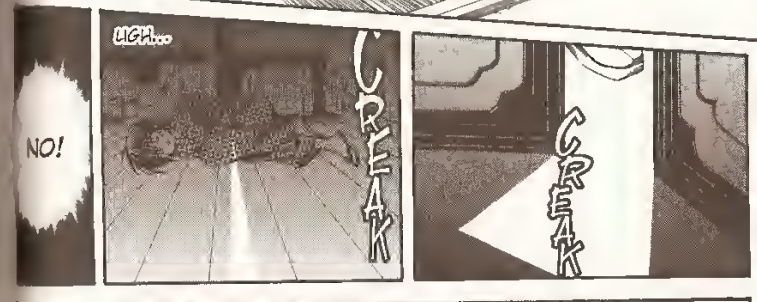

THIS IS WHAT I WAS REMEMBERING IN MY DREAM!
THIS IS
IT'S BEEN TEN YEARS, HASN'T IT, SHINICHI?
NOW THAT YOUR GRANDFATHER HAS PASSED ON, I'M ALL ALONE IN THIS HUGE MANSION. I'M SO GLAD YOU CAME BACK.
THIS ALL LOOKS KIND OF FAMILIAR...
THE ONLY THING THAT MY FATHER LEFT ME WAS THIS BUT I THINK HE WOULD BE HAPPY TOO...
FATHER TOO...
THAT LOCK!
GRANDFATHER...
FAMILY HEIRLOOMS... TO ME?
INSIDE ARE THE FAMILY HEIRLOOMS. THEY ARE THE PASSED ON EACH GENERATION TO THE ELDEST SON. SO YOUR FATHER WOULD HAVE PASSED THE INFORMATION TO YOU.
OH, YOU REMEMBER THIS? IT'S A SPECIAL LOCK OUR ANCESTORS MADE. IF YOU DON'T MOVE EACH PART IN THE PROPER ORDER, THEN THE DOOR WON'T OPEN.
MAKE THE DRAGONFLY'S EYES SPIN. ENTER THE BAMBOO FOREST...
THE WORDS MY FATHER TOLD ME WERE ACTUALLY HOW TO UNLOCK THIS.

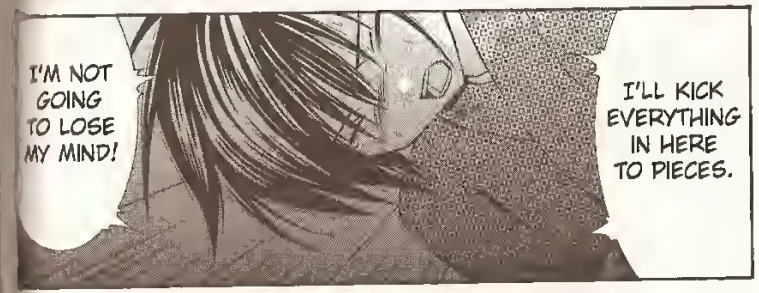
AFTER ONE MONTH, YOU'LL GROW, SO PUSH THIS UP!
AFTER ONE MONTH, THE PATH WILL OPEN. TAKE A STEP INTO THE DARK-NESS.
CLICK
TURN THE KEY RIGHT AND LEFT.
"HAVE YOUR PARTNER GO IN, TAKE A LOOK AROUND."
CLICK
THE "PARTNER."
CIRCLE? WHAT COULD THAT BE? THERE MUST BE SOME-THING LEFT...
CLICK
I PUSH THIS DOWN.
THIS! IT'S THE SHAPE OF A COIN.
!
"CHASE THE DRAGON-FLY."
"RETURN
TAKE THE KEY OUT.
CLICK
AND THEN THE CONTINUATION OF THE WORDS IN MY DREAM.
THE FINAL SENTENCE.
CLICK
MOVI THIS TOWARI IT
CLICK
HIRUKO TURNED IT LIKE THIS...
"MAKE THE DRAGON-FLY'S EYES SPIN."
CLICK
I NEED TO PUSH IT LEFT TOWARDS THE WEST.
ZSSHH
"ENTER THE BAMBOO FOREST SINK THE SUN IN THE WATER."
CLICK
THE FISH DIED AND FLOATED UP TO THE SURFACE, SO MOVE IT UP.
"THE FISH LOOKS UP AT THE SKY."
CLICK
IF I PUSH DOWN THE SNAKE TO HIDE IT, THE FROG WILL MOVE.
ZZM
"THE FROG IS WAITING TO MOVE."
SLSSH
IF MY FATHER LEFT IT...
NOW, I NEED A "PARTNER" LIKE THE VERSE SAID.
A KEY-HOLE!

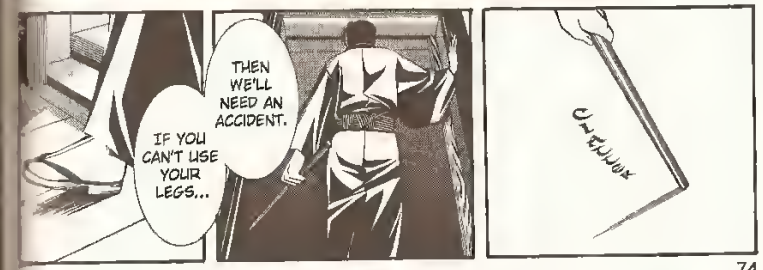

SQUIP
DO YOU KNOW HOW LONG I'VE WAITED FOR THIS...
I'M GOING TO KEEP YOU IN THE DARKNESS.
I'LL LEAVE YOU IN HERE UNTIL YOU LOSE YOUR MIND...
THAT'S WHY HE TOOK ME IN... TO GET HIS HANDS ON THE KEY!
What... What are you going to do with me?
BUT HOW COULD I STAND BY KNOWING ALL THIS WEALTH WAS IN HERE!
I TRIED TO WORK IT OUT MYSELF, BUT I STILL NEEDED THE KEY. IF I HAD BROKEN DOWN THE DOOR, THEN I WOULD HAVE BEEN DISGRACED IN FRONT OF MY FAMILY.
TAKE A STEP
!
I'LL SAY THAT SINCE YOU WERE TOO YOUNG YOU ENTRUSTED ME WITH THE WEALTH AND I'LL BE FREE TO DO WITH IT AS I LIKE...
FEAR
ALL OF THIS... IS MINE?
FI... FINALLY!
MORE LIKE THIS, I THINK!
"TAKE A STEP INTO THE DARKNESS."
IT REALLY IS DARK... THIS MUST BE WHAT THE VERSE MEANT.

WAAAAH
CLATCH

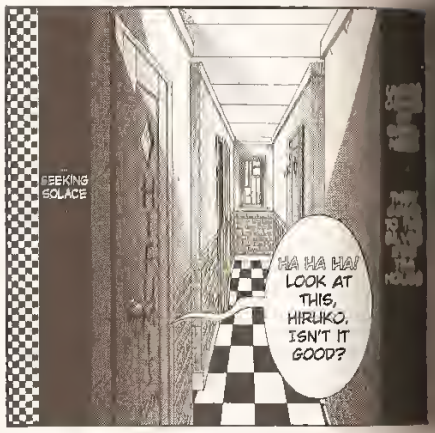



NO!
UGH...
CREAK
CREAK


I'M NOT GOING TO LOSE MY MIND!
I'LL KICK EVERYTHING IN HERE TO PIECES.


IF YOU CAN'T USE YOUR LEGS...
THEN WE'LL NEED AN ACCIDENT.

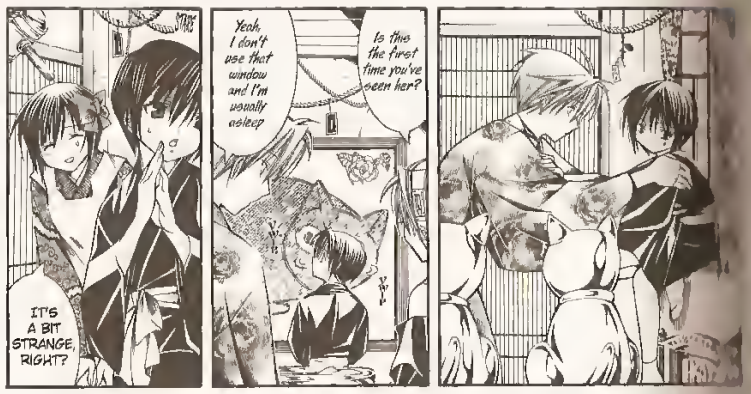
The Forty-Fifth Night: Narrow

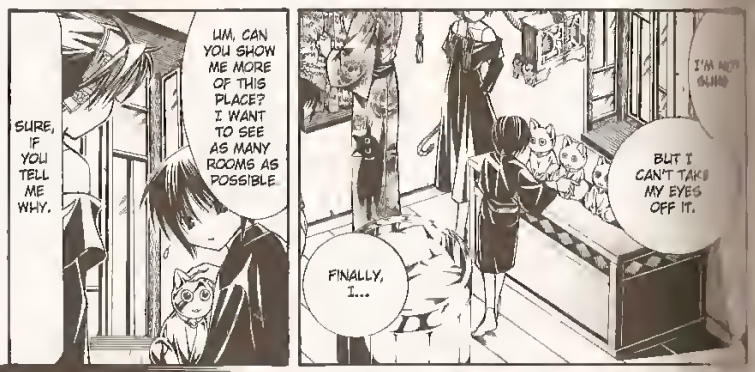


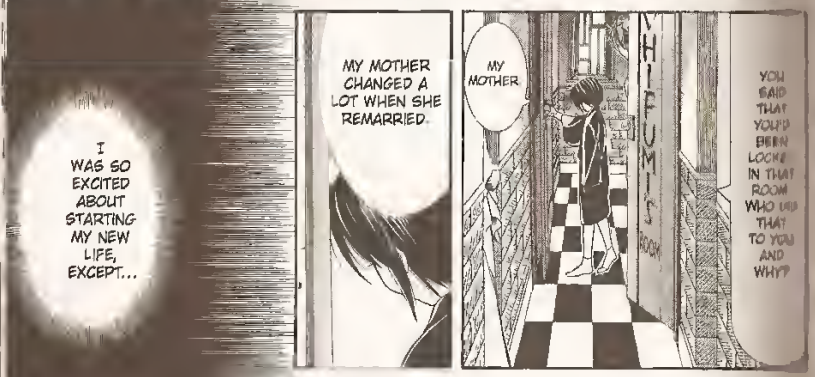
BUT UNCLE, I DON'T HATE YOU... I WOULDN'T DO THE SAME, IN FRONT OF SUCH WEALTH...?
HEH... HE'S OUT COLD.
NISH
IT'S ONLY NATURAL TO HAVE ANOTHER TRICK INSIDE.
WITH A LOCK SO DIFFICULT TO CRACK...
YOUR HEART BECAME CLOUDED...
IN FRONT OF SUCH RICHES...
YES... I'M THE SAME.

TAKE A STEP INTO THE DARKNESS.

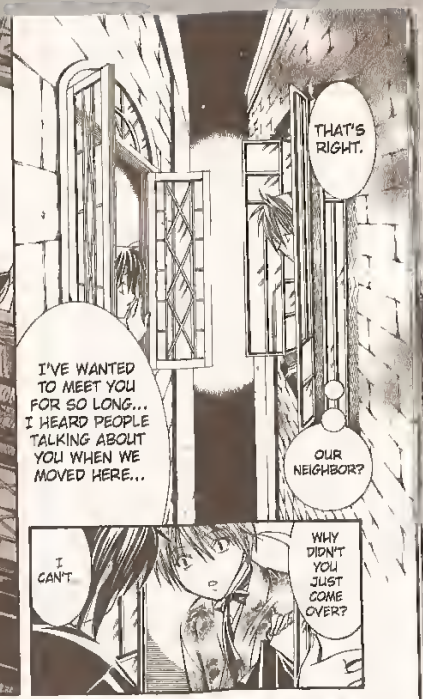
THAT LAST SENTENCE WAS THE MOST DIFFICULT TO RESOLVE.

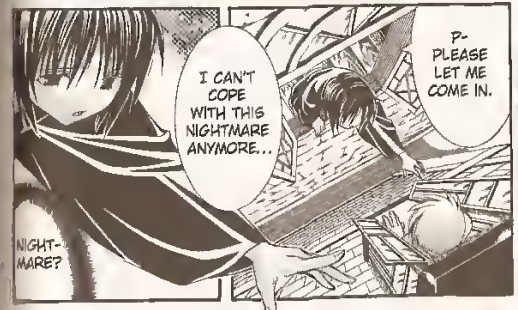

IT'S A BIT STRANGE, RIGHT?
Yeah, I don't use that window and I'm usually asleep
Is this the first time you've seen her?


SURE, IF YOU TELL ME WHY.
UM, CAN YOU SHOW ME MORE OF THIS PLACE? I WANT TO SEE AS MANY ROOMS AS POSSIBLE
I'M NOT SURE
BUT I CAN'T TAKE MY EYES OFF IT.
FINALLY, I...

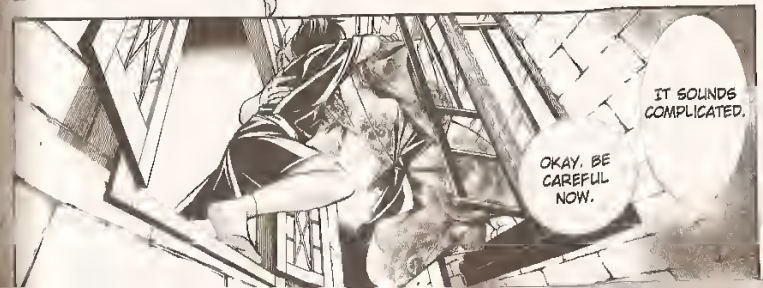

I WAS SO EXCITED ABOUT STARTING MY NEW LIFE, EXCEPT...
MY MOTHER CHANGED A LOT WHEN SHE REMARRIED.
MY MOTHER
MIFUMI'S ROOM
YOU SAID THAT YOU'D BEEN LOCKED IN THAT ROOM WHO DID THAT TO YOU AND WHY?

I'VE BEEN LOCKED IN THIS ROOM FOR YEARS...


THAT'S RIGHT.
I'VE WANTED TO MEET YOU FOR SO LONG... I HEARD PEOPLE TALKING ABOUT YOU WHEN WE MOVED HERE...
OUR NEIGHBOR?
I CAN'T
WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST COME OVER?

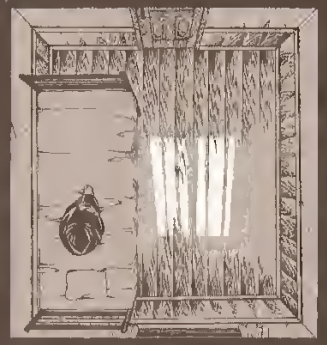

I CAN'T COPE WITH THIS NIGHTMARE ANYMORE...
P-PLEASE LET ME COME IN.
NIGHT-MARE?

SHH!
YEARS?!


IT SOUNDS COMPLICATED.
OKAY. BE CAREFUL NOW.

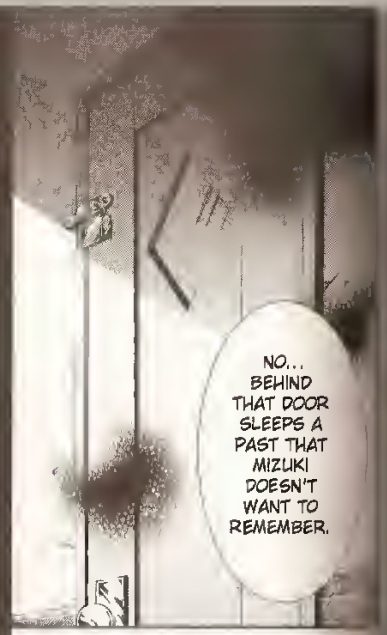
I'VE BEEN LOCKED UP IN MY ROOM SINCE BEFORE I COULD READ OR WRITE. IT'S BEEN SUCH A LONG TIME THAT I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW LONG IT'S BEEN...

I KNOW NOTHING OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD ANYMORE... ALL I KNOW IS MY ROOM...

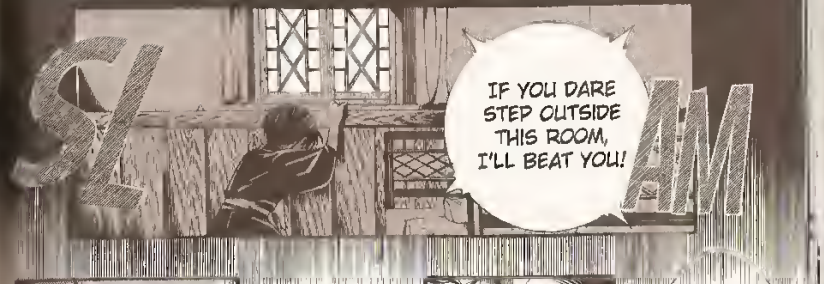


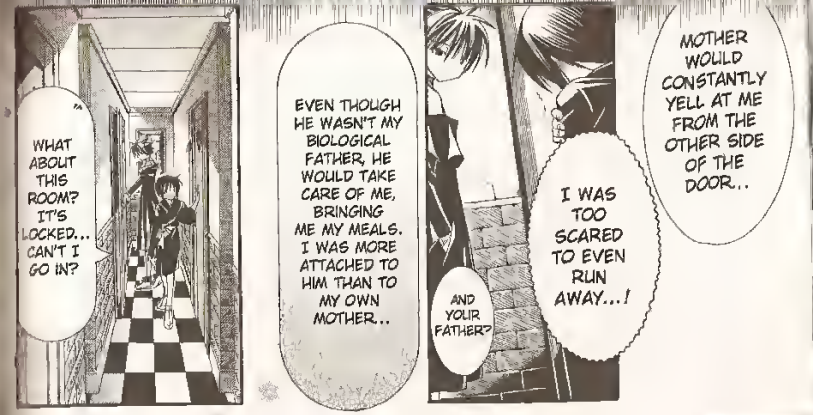
MY ENTIRE WORLD IS THAT ROOM.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?



JUST LOOKING AT YOU MAKES ME ANGRY!
YOU ARE NEVER TO LEAVE THIS ROOM EVER AGAIN!
YOUR PRESENCE REMINDS ME OF YOUR FATHER!
I WANT TO BE RID OF THAT WRETCHED, PAINFUL PAST.



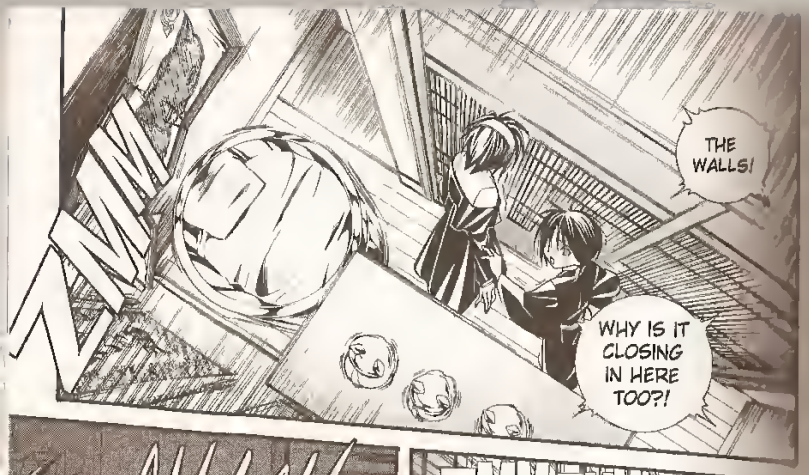

WHAT ABOUT THIS ROOM? IT'S LOCKED... CAN'T I GO IN?
EVEN THOUGH HE WASN'T MY BIOLOGICAL FATHER, HE WOULD TAKE CARE OF ME, BRINGING ME MY MEALS. I WAS MORE ATTACHED TO HIM THAN TO MY OWN MOTHER...
AND YOUR FATHER?
I WAS TOO SCARED TO EVEN RUN AWAY...!
MOTHER WOULD CONSTANTLY YELL AT ME FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR..

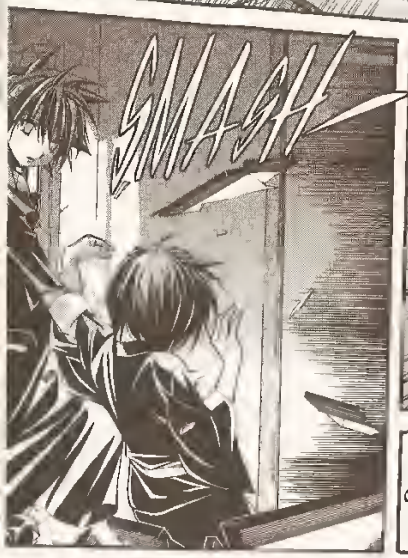
FOOSH
BUT THE SILVER STAR TEA HOUSE IS ONLY ANOTHER CONFINED SPACE ONCE YOU'VE BECOME FAMILIAR WITH IT, IT'LL START TO CLOSE IN ON YOU TOO.
PREFERABLY IN REALITY...
WE NEED TO FIND A RESOLUTION...
SLEEP NOW... LEAVE THIS WORLD BEHIND.

AND... AND NOW THE ROOM IN MY DREAM IS GETTING NARROWER ...!
EVEN MY DREAMS ALL I SEE IS THAT ROOM NO MATTER WHETHER I'M ASLEEP OR AWAKE IT'S ALWAYS THAT ROOM!
I CAN'T TAKE IT ANY-MORE!
THE WALLS ARE CLOSING IN AS IF THEY'RE GOING TO CRUSH ME!
IT'S A SIGN THAT YOUR SENSES HAVE STARTED TO SHUT DOWN.
I'M... I'M SO SCARED OF BEING CRUSHED AT ANY TIME.
BUT NOW THAT YOU'VE BEEN INSIDE HIFUMI'S ROOM, YOUR WORLD IS NOW INTERTWINED WITH THIS ONE... NOW THAT YOU'VE BROADENED YOUR HORIZONS, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO OPEN THE WINDOW AND ESCAPE FROM YOUR ROOM.
YES, KNOWING THE BAKU WAS HERE GAVE ME THE ENCOURAGE-MENT TO CONTACT YOU.
BUT I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WAS INSIDE THE ROOM AND THE WINDOW WOULDN'T OPEN...
SO IN MY DREAM, I WOULD TRY TO ESCAPE BY THE WINDOW OPPOSITE.

!
MOTHER ..?!
AH!
ZMM-ZMM-ZMM
?!
I TOLD YOU NOT TO LEAVE THIS ROOM! AS PROMISED, I'M GOING TO BEAT YOU SO HARD!
IYE! WAIT!
I SAID WAIT!
IYE!
THUNK

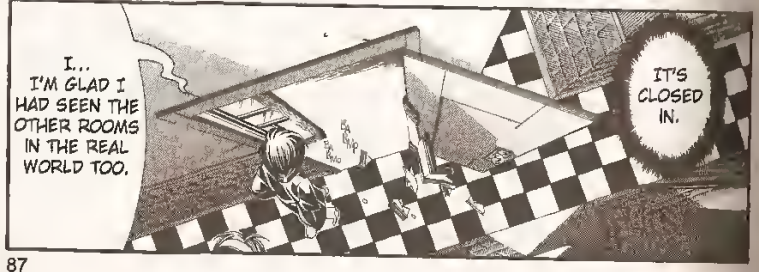
ZMM
ZMM
CALM DOWN. YOU CAN ESCAPE INTO HIFUMI'S ROOM NOW.
AHH! I'M SCARED, HIRUKO!
I CAN'T TAKE THIS ANY-MORE ...
SEE, THE WINDOW OPENS—
IYE!
CLICK

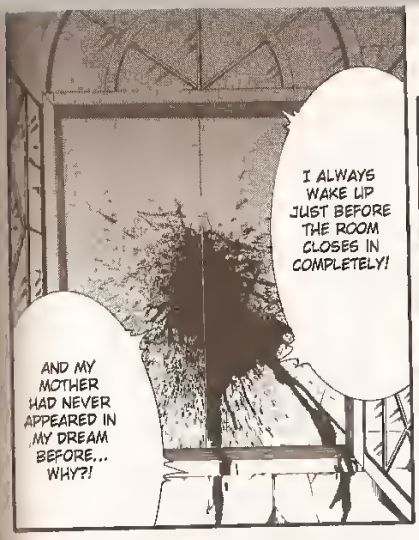

ZMM
THE WALLS!
WHY IS IT CLOSING IN HERE TOO?!


SMASH

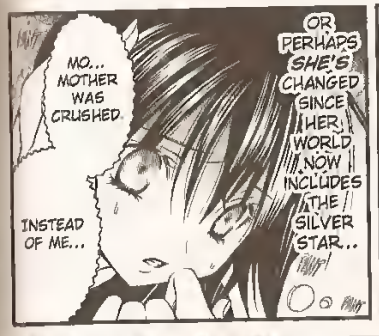
ZMM ZMM
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE! IT'S TOO DANGEROUS.

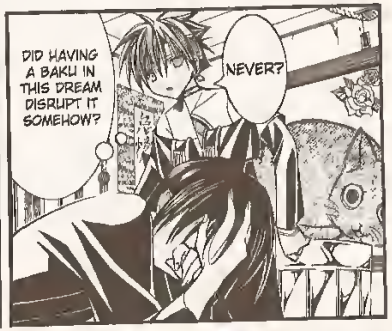
IT'S OPEN.

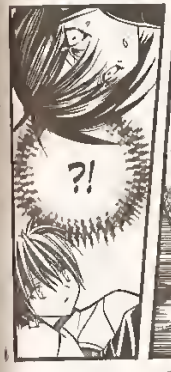

I... I'M GLAD I HAD SEEN THE OTHER ROOMS IN THE REAL WORLD TOO.
IT'S CLOSED IN.


I ALWAYS WAKE UP JUST BEFORE THE ROOM CLOSES IN COMPLETELY!
AND MY MOTHER HAD NEVER APPEARED IN MY DREAM BEFORE... WHY?!

WH... WHY?
THAT'S ODD.
ODD?


MO... MOTHER WAS CRUSHED INSTEAD OF ME...
OR PERHAPS SHE'S CHANGED SINCE HER WORLD NOW INCLUDES THE SILVER STAR...

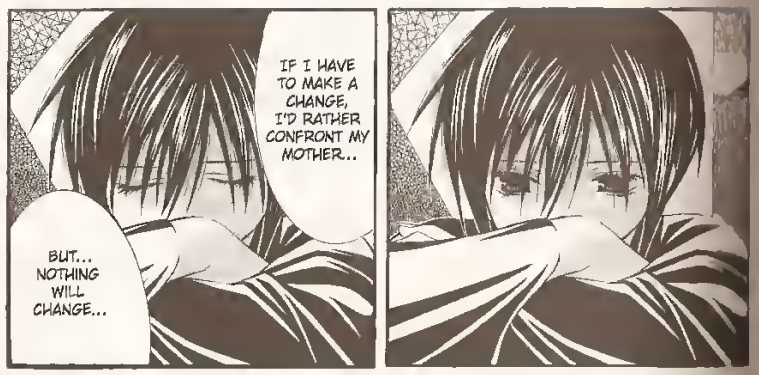

DID HAVING A BAKU IN THIS DREAM DISRUPT IT SOMEHOW?
NEVER?

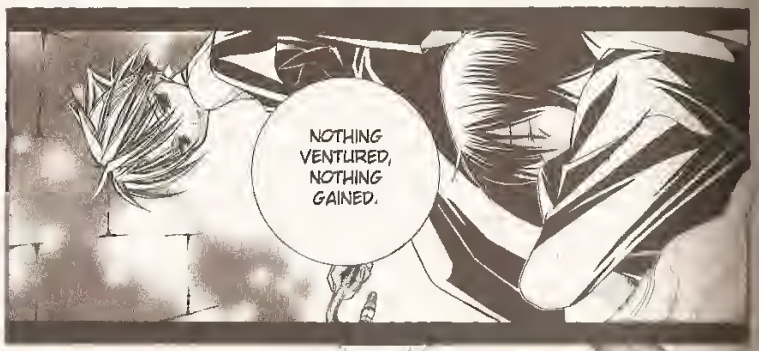

?!

ZM...
AT LEAST, UNTIL YOU GET FAMILIAR WITH THIS ROOM..
ANYWAY... YOU SHOULD BE SAFE HERE.

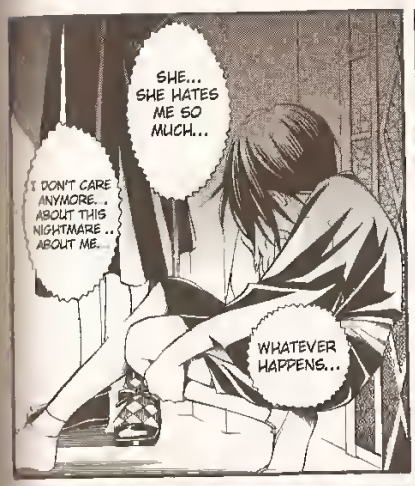
DO YOU WANT US TO BE SQUASHED?
THERE'S NO-WHERE LEFT TO RUN.
OR DO YOU...
ZMM ZMM ZMM
UGH!
CLATTER
ZMM
!!
ZMM ZMM ZMM
SO OPEN THE DOOR NOW AND FACE IT. PERHAPS IT WILL STOP THIS NIGHTMARE.
AS I SUSPECTED THERE'S SOMETHING BEHIND THIS DOOR FROM YOUR PAST THAT'S CAUSING THIS NIGHTMARE
THAT LOCKED DOOR LOOKS DIFFERENT FROM THE ONE I SAW.
NO, JUST BECAUSE YOU HAD SEEN THE OTHER ROOMS DOESN'T MEAN IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN... . IF SO, THEN THIS CORRIDOR TOO WILL...
OH!
IS THERE SOMETHING HERE THAT'S CAUSING THIS...?
"BEHIND THAT DOOR SLEEPS A PAST THAT MIZUKI DOESN'T WANT TO REMEMBER."
!
PERHAPS THERE IS SOMETHING BEHIND THIS DOOR THAT YOU DON'T WANT TO REMEMBER TOO?
THE LOCKED DOOR YOU SAW AT THE SILVER STAR HAS OVERLAPPED WITH THE LOCKED DOOR IN YOUR HOUSE IN THIS DREAM.
I KNOW THIS DOOR ...
IT'S IN MY HOUSE, ON THE FIRST FLOOR.
THE PAST ...
"IT WAS THIS DOOR THEN.

I WAS BLIND-FOLDED AND BEING BRICKED INTO A WALL...
STOP.
PLEASE STOP...
I LEFT MY ROOM JUST ONCE AND WENT DOWN STAIRS I WAS PLANNING TO RUN AWAY
I'M SO SQUISHED IN HERE...
FORGIVE ME
I SEE ...
I WAS SO SCARED... I LOST CONSCIOUS-NESS...
WHEN I WOKE UP AGAIN, I WAS BACK IN MY ROOM...
IF YOU DARE STEP OUTSIDE THIS ROOM I'LL BEAT YOU!
BUT...
PLEASE ...!
STOP!
I WON'T LEAVE MY ROOM AGAIN ..
HIT
HIT
N-NO !!
THAT, WITH HER FEAR OF THE WALL BRICKING HER IN, MADE HER HAVE THIS NIGHTMARE.
NOT ONLY DID HER MOTHER REJECT HER, BUT SHE EVEN TRIED TO KILL HER.
MY MOTHER MUST HAVE SEEN ME BECAUSE ONE NIGHT I WOKE UP AND...
I COULDN'T DO IT... I HAD TO GIVE UP.
LYS THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU...
SHE BRICKED UP HER OWN DAUGHTER ...
I...
...

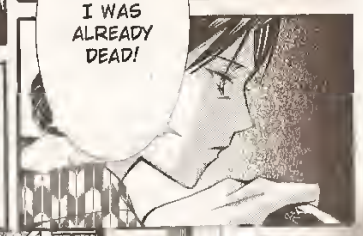

IF I HAVE TO MAKE A CHANGE, I'D RATHER CONFRONT MY MOTHER...
BUT... NOTHING WILL CHANGE...


NOTHING VENTURED, NOTHING GAINED.

TIME TO WAKE UP
YOOSH!


SHE... SHE HATES ME SO MUCH...
I DON'T CARE ANYMORE... ABOUT THIS NIGHTMARE... ABOUT ME...
WHATEVER HAPPENS...

MY MOTHER NEVER YELLED AT ME FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF MY DOOR AGAIN.


TO HER, I WAS ALREADY DEAD!

?!
IF YOU DON'T CARE WHY DON'T YOU JUST LEAVE?

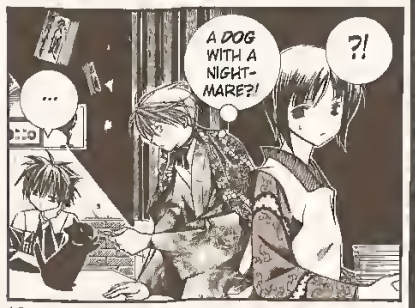
YOU HAVE TO TAKE ACTION IN THE REAL WORLD. YOUR WORLD IS NOT JUST IN THAT ROOM.
SO WHY NOT FACE THE MUSIC? CONFRONT YOUR MOTHER AND GET BEATEN OR LEAVE THE HOUSE...
IF YOU GIVE UP, YOUR NIGHTMARE WON'T STOP AND YOUR MOTHER WON'T CHANGE.

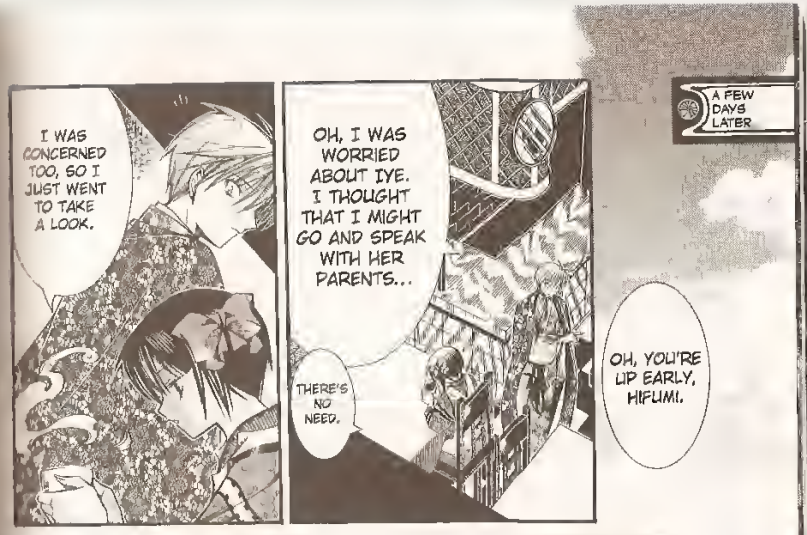
I'M GOING OUT OF MY ROOM.
IF THAT'S THE CASE, THEN SHE'S TRYING TO HIDE FROM THE REAL MEMORY.
I'M GOING TO CONFRONT MY MOTHER.
MO... MOTHER WAS CRUSHED
AND IF THE DREAM ACTUALLY HAS ANOTHER MEANING...
PERHAPS IT WAS A PREDICTION... OF THE FUTURE..
THE WALLS
WHY IS IT CLOSING IN HERE TOO?!
CLATCH
CLATCH
HMM..
WHAT IS IT?
I TOLD HER IF ANYTHING HAPPENS, SHE COULD COME BACK HERE.
HEY, DO YOU THINK SHE'LL BE ABLE TO CONFRONT HER MOTHER?
IYE JUST LEFT THROUGH MY ROOM TO HER OWN.
AND, THAT SINCE THAT DAY, HER MOTHER STOPPED YELLING AT HER...
IN HER MEMORY, THAT FACT THAT HER EYES WERE COVERED IS BOTHERING ME.
YOU MEAN HER MEMORY IS PLAYING TRICKS ON HER DREAM?
?!
WHAT IF SHE ONLY "BELIEVES" THAT IT WAS HER MOTHER?
EXACTLY.
HUH? IF HER EYES WERE COVERED AND THE PERSON BRICKING HER UP DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING, THEN HOW DID SHE KNOW WHO...

SHE WAS AFRAID THAT I'D BE JEALOUS OF YOU IF SHE CARED FOR YOU. SO SHE WAS DELIBERATELY CRUEL TO YOU.
IT WAS ALL AN ACT.
OF COURSE I FIGURED IT OUT. IT MEANS SHE STILL CARED FOR YOUR FATHER.
!
SO THAT NIGHT, I BRICKED YOU UP... TO CUT HER OFF FROM ALL TIES WITH HIM.
"STOP!"
"PLEASE STOP!!"
BUT YOUR CRIES ALERTED HER.
HMM? ARE YOU SAYING SHE DIDN'T LOVE HIM ANYMORE?
AND SHE WON'T BE ABLE TO GO BACK TO YOUR FATHER.
...AS IF I COULD BELIEVE THAT.
SHE PROTECTED YOU WITH HER LIFE AFTER ALL.
OH, IYE... YOU SHOULDN'T BE OUT OF YOUR ROOM..
AND YOUR MOTHER TRIED SO HARD TO STOP YOU...
WHERE IS MOTHER ...?
FA... FATHER, WHAT IS THIS?
JUST AS WELL. I WAS JUST ABOUT TO COME AND GET YOU.
SHE'S ALL MINE NOW.
HA HA. SHE'S RIGHT HERE.

THAT NIGHT YOU LOOKED SO FRIGHTENED TOO. YOU FAINTED OUT OF FEAR, DIDN'T YOU?
NOW THERE'S NO ONE LEFT TO PROTECT YOU...
...
MY MOTHER... LOVES ME.
SO INSTEAD OF ME, SHE...
LUCKILY, YOUR MEMORY WARPED. SO THAT YOU COULD COPE WITH THE FEAR, YOU CONFUSED ME WITH YOUR MOTHER
IF I LOSE YOU TOO, THEN WHAT WILL I LIVE FOR...?
...
BUT ...
SO AS I FIRST PLANNED, YOU TOO WILL...
I TRIED MY BEST TO LOVE YOU... BUT I JUST COULDN'T
HOW WILL I GO ON, HAVING TO LIVE HERE ALL BY MYSELF...?!
SOMETHING WRONG... WITH ME? I JUST LOVE YOU.
STOP IT! WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU!
WH... WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO IYE—?!
THEN WHY DON'T YOU BELIEVE ME?!
WHEN WILL YOU START TRUSTING ME?!
WHAT CAN I DO—
WHAT CAN YOU DO? THEN...
IF I MAKE IT SO YOU CAN NEVER LEAVE...
BECOME MINE...
GASP

The Forty-Sixth Night: The Dog



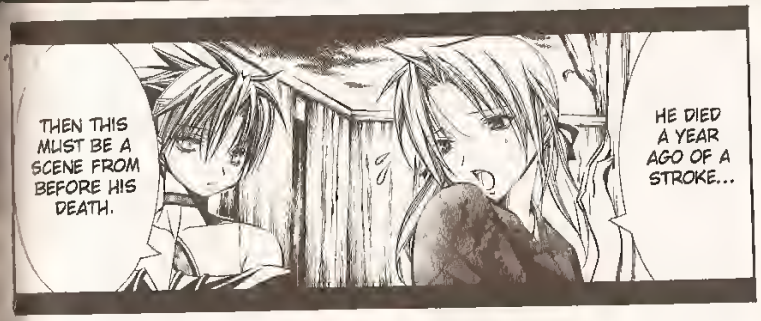

I WAS CONCERNED TOO, SO I JUST WENT TO TAKE A LOOK.
OH, I WAS WORRIED ABOUT IYE. I THOUGHT THAT I MIGHT GO AND SPEAK WITH HER PARENTS...
THERE'S NO NEED.
A FEW DAYS LATER
OH, YOU'RE UP EARLY, HIFUMI.

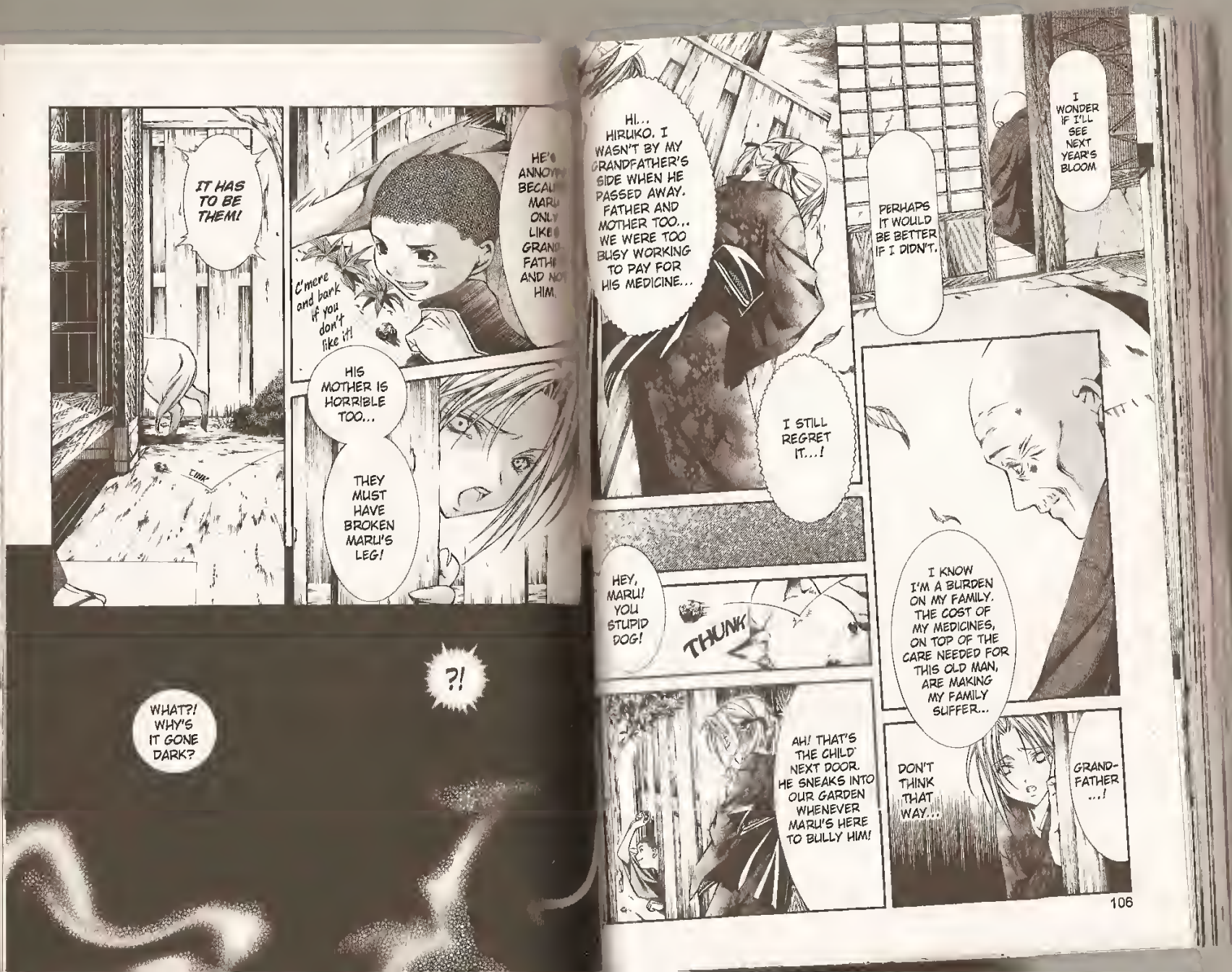
YES, I SAW A SHADOW IN THE MORNING MIST OF SOMEONE PULLING A CART. BUT...
THEY MOVED OUT?!
AND ALL THEIR THINGS WERE GONE TOO.
BUT NO ONE WAS THERE.
THERE'S NO ONE NEXT DOOR NOW...
WHO WAS THAT ...?
ONE THING I CAN SAY IS...
I ONLY SAW ONE PERSON LEAVE.
EVEN THOUGH THREE PEOPLE LIVED THERE...

SLEEP NOW... LEAVE THIS WORLD BEHIND.
BUT A FEW DAYS AGO WE FOUND HIM IN OUR GARDEN WITH A BROKEN LEG...
MARU IS A STRAY DOG, BUT HE COMES AROUND TO OUR HOUSE OFTEN.
I CAN'T LET THE PERSON WHO DID THIS TO MARU GET AWAY WITH IT!
IF HIS BROKEN LEG WASN'T AN ACCIDENT— IF SOMEONE PURPOSELY DID THIS TO HIM, WE MAY BE ABLE TO SEE WHO DID IT IN HIS DREAM!
What an unfriendly dog.
EVER SINCE THEN HE'S BEEN HAVING THESE NIGHTMARES. I THINK HE'S RELIVING THAT PAINFUL MEMORY.
SHE'S SO PASSIONATE.
CLATTER
FINE. BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO ACCOMPANY ME.
MY WHOLE FAMILY CARES FOR MARU SO MUCH!
MY PARENTS ARE DEVAS-TATED TOO!
PLEASE!
HMPH. WHY SHOULD I GO INTO AN ANIMAL'S DREAM?

THIS WAS MY GRANDFATHER'S FAVORITE CAMELLIA TREE. THERE WAS A HOLE IN THE FENCE UNDERNEATH IT WHERE MARU WOULD COME IN THROUGH.
MARU... ARE YOU THERE, MARU?
MY GRAND-FATHER WAS A BIT DIFFICULT TOO, SO I GUESS THAT'S WHY THEY GOT ALONG.
HE'S NOT A VERY FRIENDLY DOG, BUT HE LOVED MY GRAND-FATHER.
WE'VE WATCHED THE FLOWERS BLOOM ON THAT TREE SO MANY TIMES TOGETHER...
MARU... I WONDER HOW LONG IT'S BEEN SINCE YOU'VE BEEN COMING HERE.
HA HA... LOOKS LIKE WE'VE BEEN GROWING OLD TOGETHER TOO.

OH, IT'S OUR GARDEN.
AND THAT'S MY GRAND-FATHER!


THEN THIS MUST BE A SCENE FROM BEFORE HIS DEATH.
HE DIED A YEAR AGO OF A STROKE...


IT HAS TO BE THEM!
HE'S ANNOYING BECAUSE MARU ONLY LIKES GRANDFATHER AND NOT HIM.
C'mere and bark if you don't like it!
HIS MOTHER IS HORRIBLE TOO...
THEY MUST HAVE BROKEN MARU'S LEG!
?!
WHAT?! WHY'S IT GONE DARK?
HI... HIRUKO. I WASN'T BY MY GRANDFATHER'S SIDE WHEN HE PASSED AWAY. FATHER AND MOTHER TOO... WE WERE TOO BUSY WORKING TO PAY FOR HIS MEDICINE...
I STILL REGRET IT...!
PERHAPS IT WOULD BE BETTER IF I DIDN'T.
I WONDER IF I'LL SEE NEXT YEAR'S BLOOM.
I KNOW I'M A BURDEN ON MY FAMILY. THE COST OF MY MEDICINES, ON TOP OF THE CARE NEEDED FOR THIS OLD MAN, ARE MAKING MY FAMILY SUFFER...
HEY, MARU! YOU STUPID DOG!
THUNK
AH! THAT'S THE CHILD NEXT DOOR. HE SNEAKS INTO OUR GARDEN WHENEVER MARU'S HERE TO BULLY HIM!
DON'T THINK THAT WAY...
GRAND-FATHER ...!

AH!
UGH...
PERHAPS THIS IS WHEN...
AGH!
WOOF
YOU SAID HE'D DIED OF A STROKE...
OH! GRANDFATHER!
WOOF
WOOF
MARU?!
MARU NEVER EVER BARKS!
WOOF WOOF
IS HE TRYING TO CALL FOR HELP?!

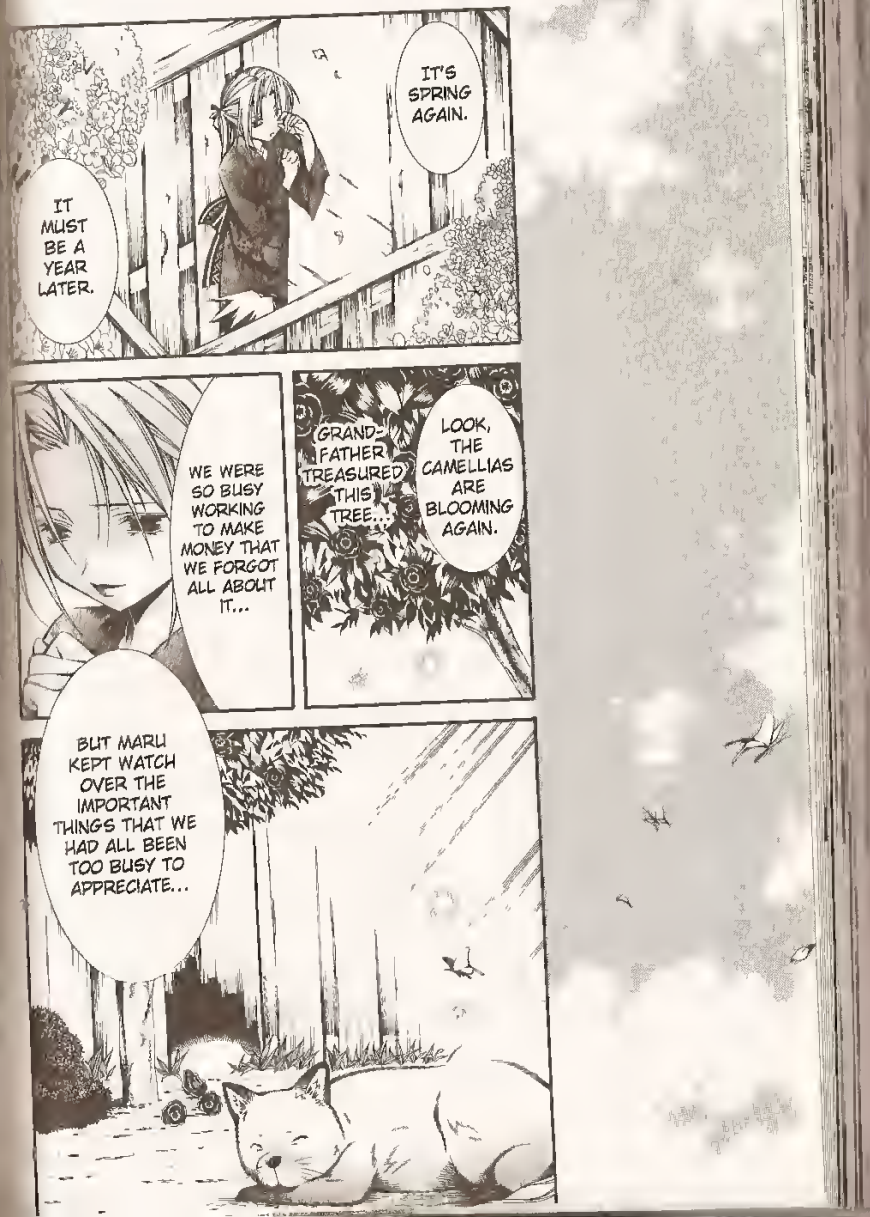
I WAS THINKING THAT TOO...
YES, YOU'RE RIGHT.
THIS DREAM SEEMS TO BE A COLLECTION OF MARU'S MOST IMPORTANT MEMORIES.
OH! THE FLOWERS HAVE BLOOMED!
IT'S SPRING!
PLOP
PLOP
WOOSH

HELP ...!
OH NO! NONE OF US ARE AT HOME...
IS... IS ANYONE HERE?!
THAT'S WHY HE DIED A YEAR AGO LAST SPRING.
HELP ISN'T COMING.
...

GRAND-FATHER!
!
GATTER
LICK
LICK

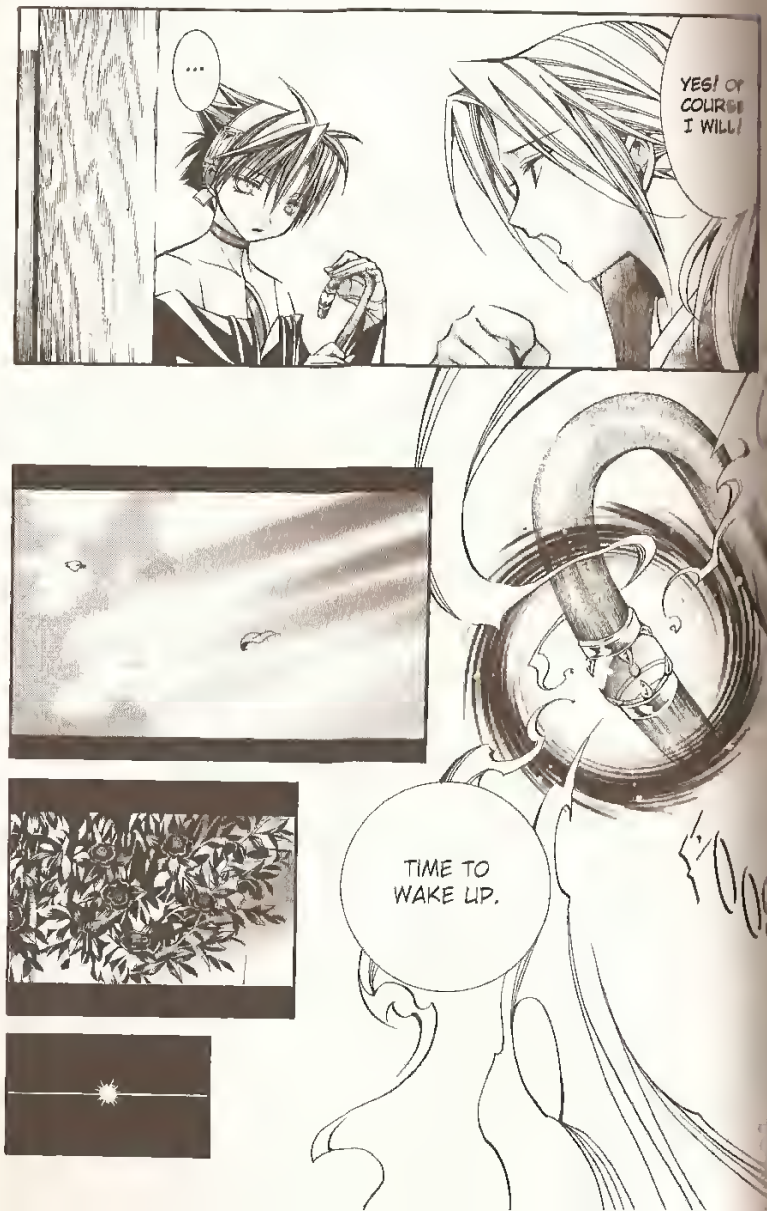
I'M... I'M SORRY, GRANDFATHER... THAT WE COULDN'T... THAT NO ONE WAS HERE WITH YOU AT THE END...
BUT... MARU, YOU WERE WITH HIM...
BECAUSE OF YOU, I WAS ABLE TO BE WITH MY GRANDFATHER ON HIS DEATHBED. EVEN IF IT WAS ONLY IN A DREAM...

OH, THAT BRAT HAS COME TO BULLY MARU AGAIN.
HMM...?
OH, THAT'S THE PIT WE DUG FOR ALL THE FALLEN LEAVES. IT'S REALLY DEEP! IT MUST'VE FILLED UP WITH MUD...
SPLASH
SPLASH
AAGH! SOMEBODY HELP ME!
FW
WAAH!
MOM!
HELP ME!
SLIP
I CAN'T GET OUT. MOM!

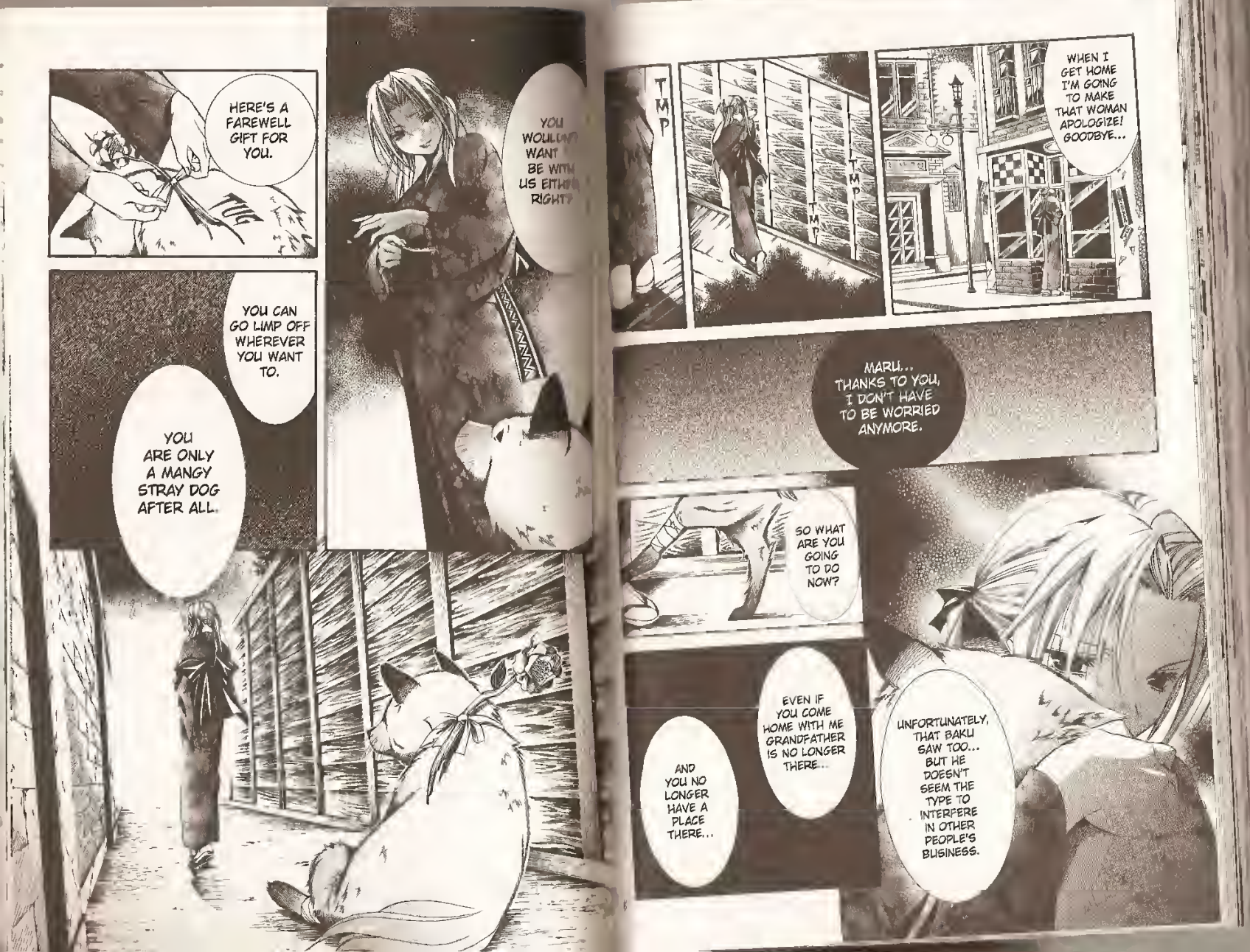

IT'S SPRING AGAIN.
IT MUST BE A YEAR LATER.
WE WERE SO BUSY WORKING TO MAKE MONEY THAT WE FORGOT ALL ABOUT IT...
GRAND-FATHER TREASURED THIS TREE...
LOOK, THE CAMELLIAS ARE BLOOMING AGAIN.
BUT MARU KEPT WATCH OVER THE IMPORTANT THINGS THAT WE HAD ALL BEEN TOO BUSY TO APPRECIATE...

UHN!
GRAB HOLD OF ME!
WHACK
WHAT ARE YOU DOING GOING INTO OTHER PEOPLE'S GARDENS
SQUEEZE
YELP!
!
MARU'S LEG...

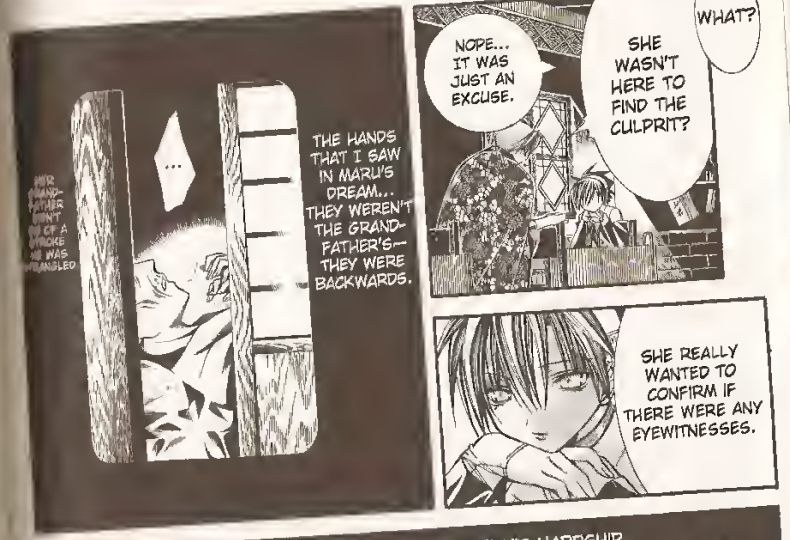
MARU, ARE YOU...?
YANK YANK
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
MOM!
YANK
YANK
C'MON! HURRY AND PULL ME OUT, YOU OLD MUTT!
HURRY!
YANK
C'MON ...!
TRY HARDER, YOU STUPID DOG!


...
YES! OF COURSE I WILL!
TIME TO WAKE UP.

MARU
...
DON'T YOU DARE APOLOGIZE!
NO MATTER. LET'S GET OUT OF HERE! WE DON'T WANT PEOPLE KNOWING YOU WERE HERE.
...NATSUKO?
WHEN YOU WAKE UP ARE YOU GOING TO GO YELL AT YOUR NEIGHBORS?
NOW WE KNOW WHO DID IT.


HERE'S A FAREWELL GIFT FOR YOU.
TUG
YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO BE WITH US EITHER, RIGHT?
YOU CAN GO LIMP OFF WHEREVER YOU WANT TO.
YOU ARE ONLY A MANGY STRAY DOG AFTER ALL.
TMP
TMP
TMP
WHEN I GET HOME I'M GOING TO MAKE THAT WOMAN APOLOGIZE! GOODBYE...
MARU... THANKS TO YOU, I DON'T HAVE TO BE WORRIED ANYMORE.
SO WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW?
EVEN IF YOU COME HOME WITH ME GRANDFATHER IS NO LONGER THERE...
AND YOU NO LONGER HAVE A PLACE THERE...
UNFORTUNATELY, THAT BAKU SAW TOO... BUT HE DOESN'T SEEM THE TYPE TO INTERFERE IN OTHER PEOPLE'S BUSINESS.

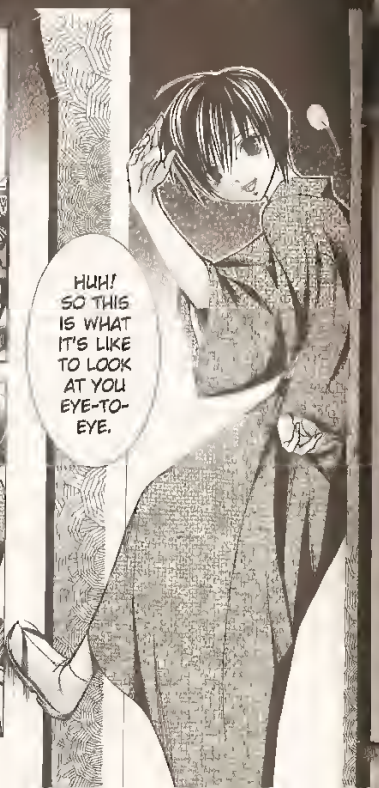
SINCE IT HAPPENED ON THE SAME DAY, IT'S NOT FAR-FETCHED FOR NATSUKO TO THINK MARU WOULD BE DREAMING ABOUT THAT.
SHE MAY HAVE BEEN CRYING FROM GUILT THOUGH...
"MY GRANDFATHER DIED A YEAR AGO OF A STROKE..."
"I WASN'T BY MY GRANDFATHER'S SIDE WHEN HE PASSED AWAY."
HER TEARS WERE FAKE.
THE NUMBER OF BLOOMS THAT HAD FALLEN AND WHERE THEY FELL WERE THE SAME.
THAT'S WHY YOU FOLLOWED AFTER NATSUKO...
MARU HAS NOWHERE TO GO NOW... WHERE WILL HE...
SHE KNEW ALL ALONG AND USED MARU...
...
FOR EXAMPLE...
MARU'S HOME COULD BE ANYWHERE
BUT HIRUKO, WE CAN'T KEEP ANY MORE PETS HERE...
THAT'S NOT IT.


HER GRANDFATHER DIED OF A STROKE AND WAS BEDRIDDEN
...
THE HANDS THAT I SAW IN MARU'S DREAM... THEY WEREN'T THE GRANDFATHER'S— THEY WERE BACKWARDS.
WHAT?
SHE WASN'T HERE TO FIND THE CULPRIT?
NOPE... IT WAS JUST AN EXCUSE.
SHE REALLY WANTED TO CONFIRM IF THERE WERE ANY EYEWITNESSES.

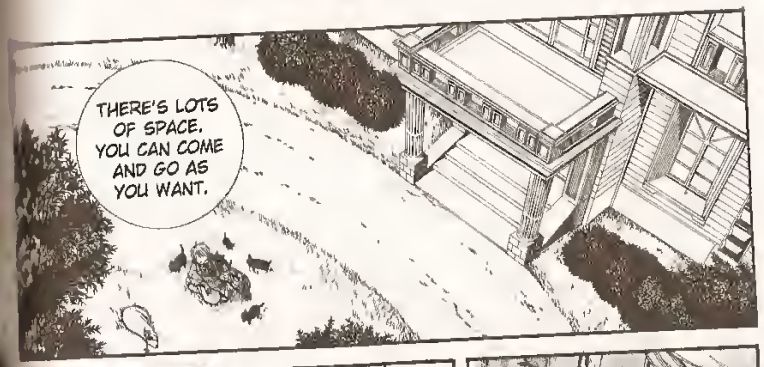
HER GRANDFATHER WAS THE CAUSE OF HER FAMILY'S HARDSHIP.
SHE KILLED HIM OUT OF DESPERATION, BUT AFTERWARDS SHE STARTED TO WORRY THAT SOMEONE MIGHT HAVE SEEN WHAT SHE'D DONE.

IT HAPPENED A YEAR AGO, RIGHT? WHY WOULD NATSUKO WANT TO FIND OUT NOW?
BUT HOW COULD SHE KNOW THAT MARU WOULD BE DREAMING ABOUT THAT PARTICULAR DAY? ISN'T THAT A LONG SHOT?
SO SHE USED MARU'S DREAM TO FIND OUT, FOR SURE.
ESPECIALLY THE BOY NEXT DOOR, WHO WOULD OFTEN SNEAK INTO THEIR GARDEN TO BULLY MARU.
HER GRAND-FATHER DIED A FEW DAYS AGO— THE SAME DAY MARU BROKE HIS LEG.
!
IT WASN'T A YEAR AGO.

The Forty-Seventh Night: Bathhouse

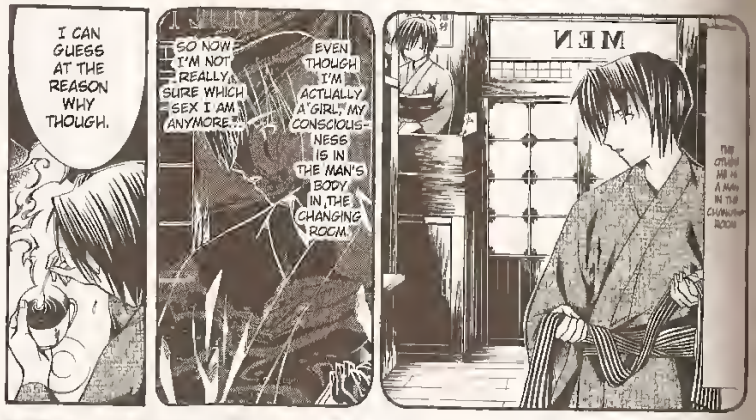


A FEW DAYS LATER AT HIFUMI'S MANSION...

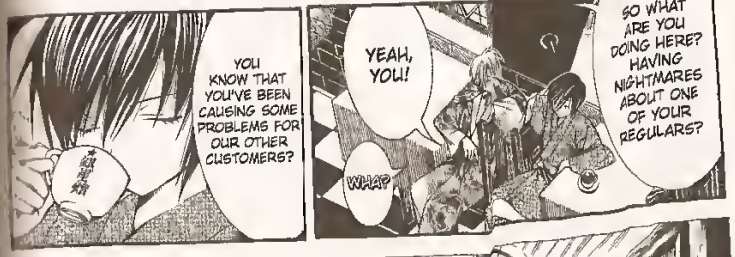


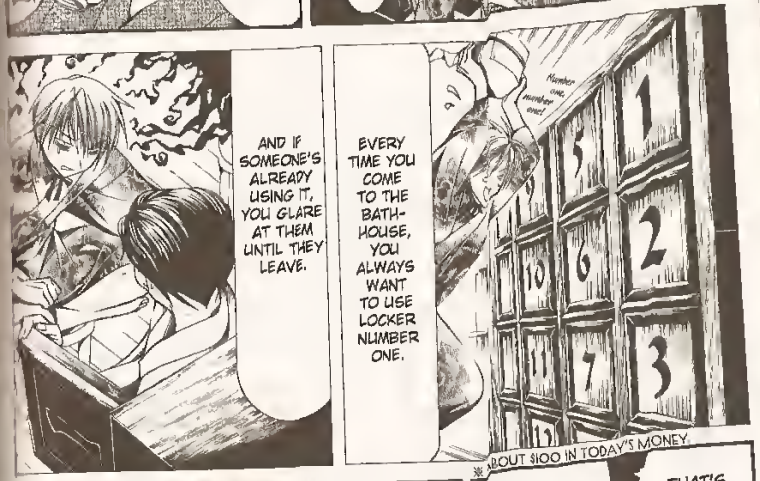
AS LONG AS HE HAS THAT, HE CAN BE ANYWHERE...

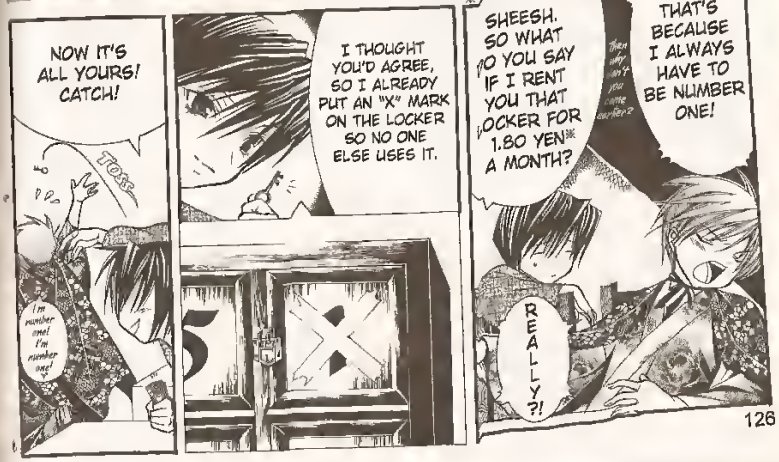
ONE IS A PROPER YOUNG LADY THAT SITS STILL.
I'M HAVING THIS NIGHTMARE WHERE THERE ARE TWO OF ME IN THE DREAM.
RIGHT, NOW ABOUT MY DREAM.


I CAN GUESS AT THE REASON WHY THOUGH.
SO NOW I'M NOT REALLY SURE WHICH SEX I AM ANYMORE.
EVEN THOUGH I'M ACTUALLY A "GIRL," MY CONSCIOUSNESS IS IN THE MAN'S BODY IN THE CHANGING ROOM.
THE OTHERS SEE ME AS A MAN IN THE CHANGING ROOM.

OH MY! OH NO...
WOULD YOU BE OKAY, MIZUKI?
YES, YOU'RE A PROPER LADY...
That's the normal reaction.
MY ROUGH-AND-TUMBLE FATHER BROUGHT ME UP LIKE A BOY. I'VE GOTTEN USED TO SEEING MEN NAKED, SO IT DOESN'T EVEN BOTHER ME.

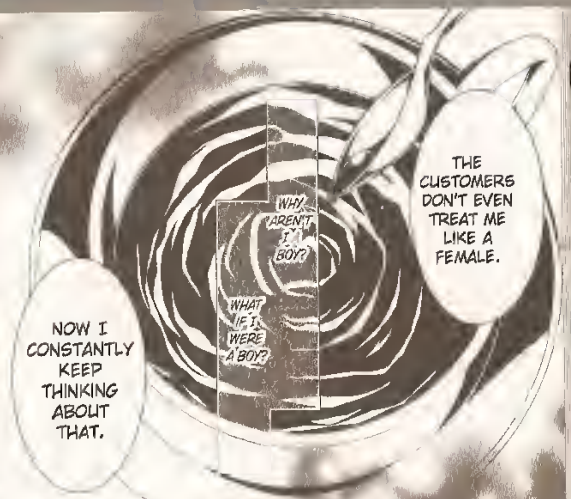

YOU KNOW THAT YOU'VE BEEN CAUSING SOME PROBLEMS FOR OUR OTHER CUSTOMERS?
YEAH, YOU!
WHAT?
SO WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? HAVING NIGHTMARES ABOUT ONE OF YOUR REGULARS?

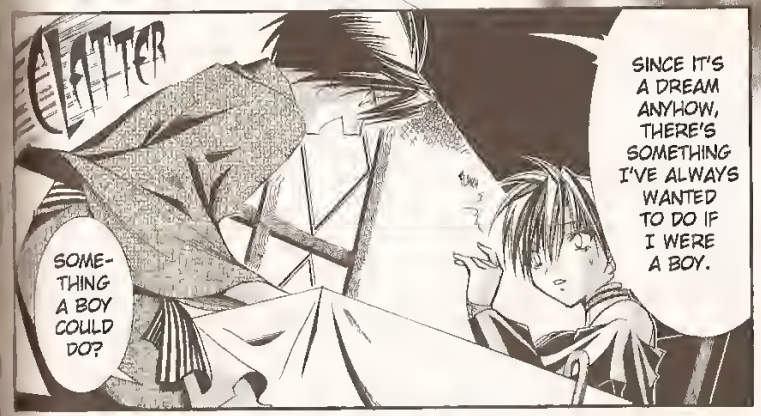

AND IF SOMEONE'S ALREADY USING IT, YOU GLARE AT THEM UNTIL THEY LEAVE.
EVERY TIME YOU COME TO THE BATH-HOUSE, YOU ALWAYS WANT TO USE LOCKER NUMBER ONE.
Number one, number one!
※ABOUT $100 IN TODAY'S MONEY

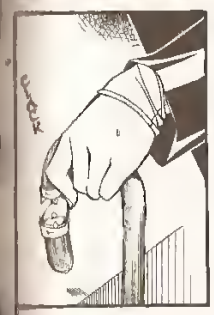

NOW IT'S ALL YOURS! CATCH!
Toss
I'm number one! I'm number one!
I THOUGHT YOU'D AGREE, SO I ALREADY PUT AN "X" MARK ON THE LOCKER SO NO ONE ELSE USES IT.
SHEESH. SO WHAT DO YOU SAY IF I RENT YOU THAT LOCKER FOR 1.80 YEN※ A MONTH?
REALLY?!
THAT'S BECAUSE I ALWAYS HAVE TO BE NUMBER ONE!

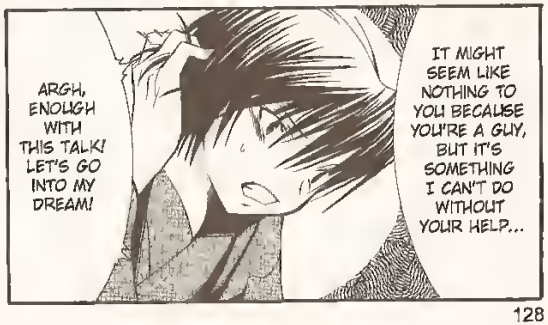
SLEEP NOW... LEAVE THIS WORLD BEHIND.

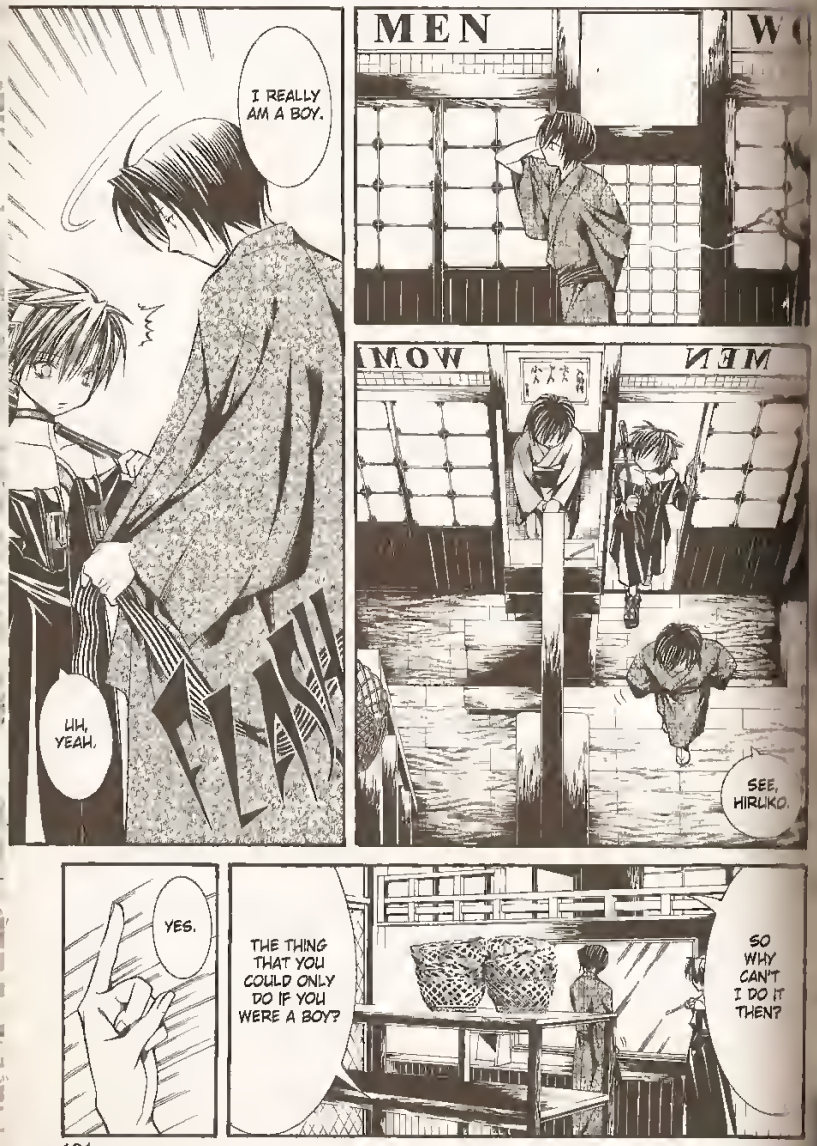
SO YOUR CONFUSION ABOUT YOUR GENDER IS MAKING YOU HAVE THIS NIGHTMARE?
OUT!


THE CUSTOMERS DON'T EVEN TREAT ME LIKE A FEMALE.
WHY AREN'T I A BOY?
WHAT IF I WERE A BOY?
NOW I CONSTANTLY KEEP THINKING ABOUT THAT.


CLATTER
SOME-THING A BOY COULD DO?
SINCE IT'S A DREAM ANYHOW, THERE'S SOMETHING I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO DO IF I WERE A BOY.


UNLOCK

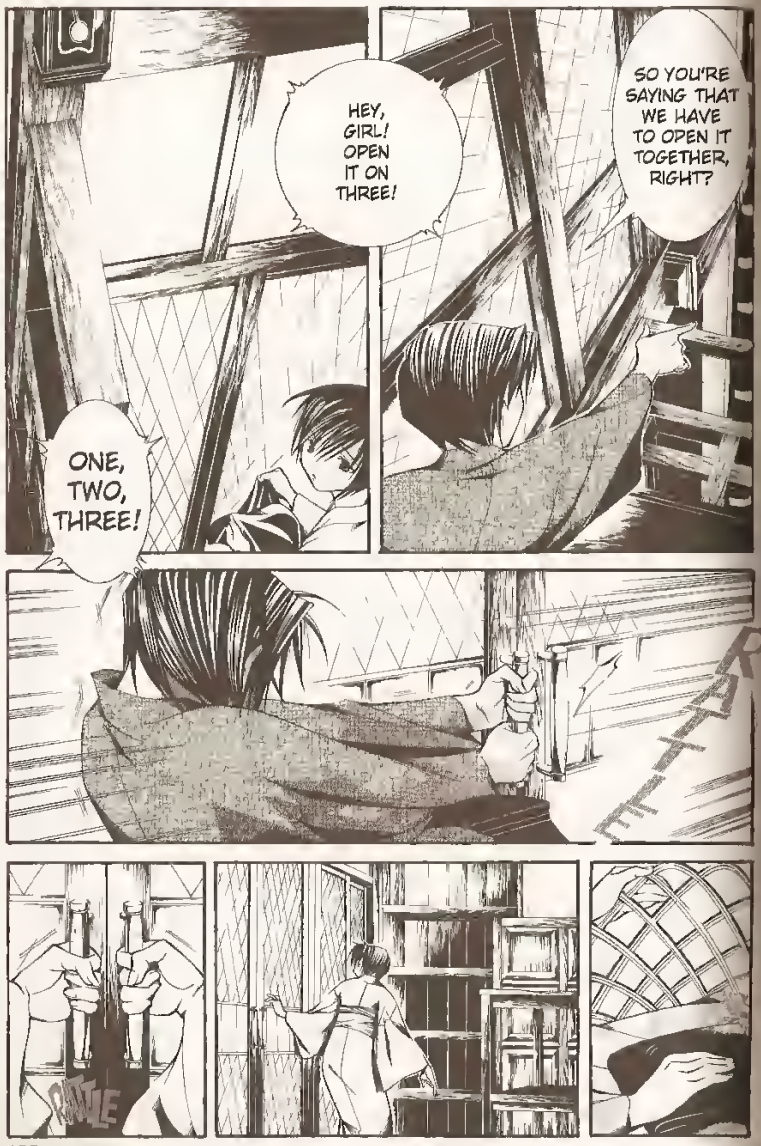

ARGH, ENOUGH WITH THIS TALK! LET'S GO INTO MY DREAM!
IT MIGHT SEEM LIKE NOTHING TO YOU BECAUSE YOU'RE A GUY, BUT IT'S SOMETHING I CAN'T DO WITHOUT YOUR HELP...


I REALLY AM A BOY.
UH, YEAH.
FLASH
MEN
SEE, HIRUKO.
YES.
THE THING THAT YOU COULD ONLY DO IF YOU WERE A BOY?
SO WHY CAN'T I DO IT THEN?

CLATTER
OH, YOU SHOULD BE ON THE OTHER SIDE.

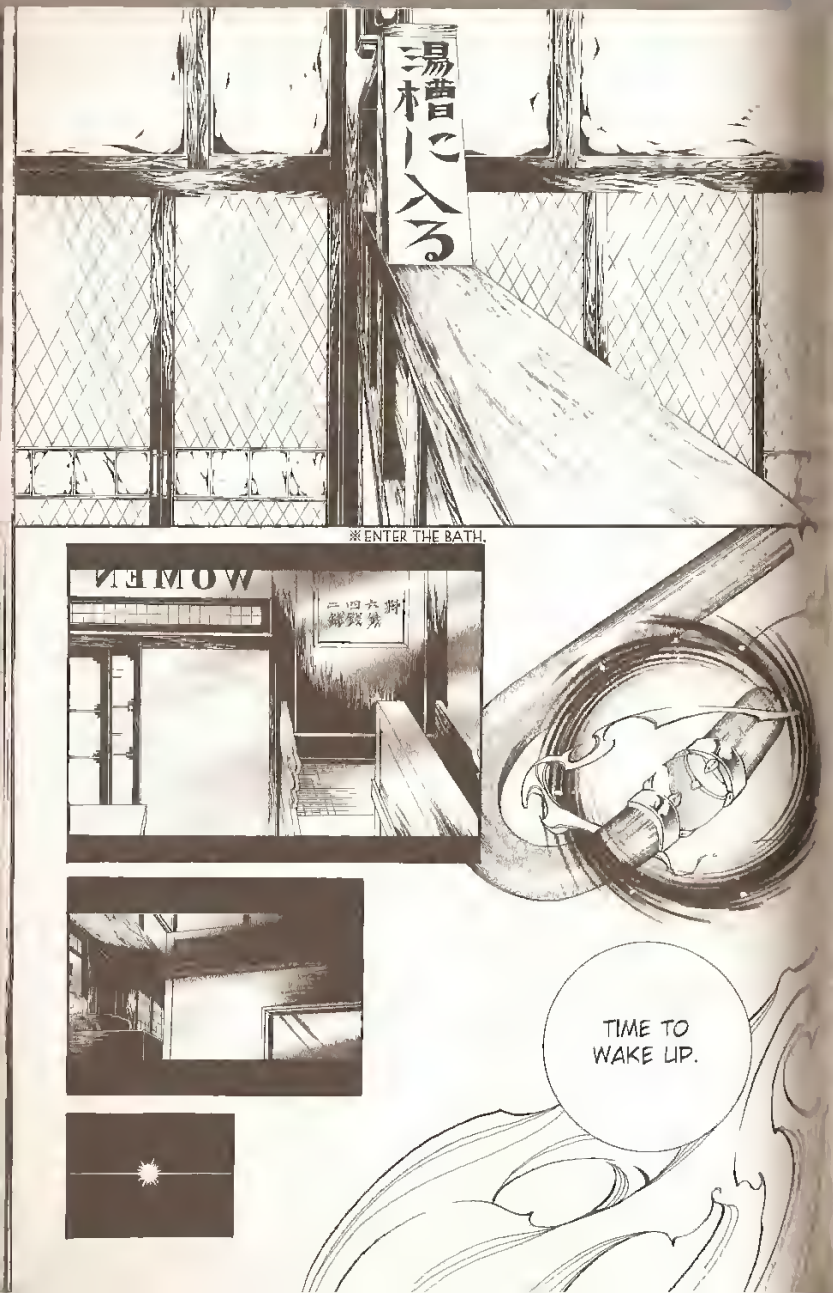
SO I WANT TO TRY IT ONCE... IF ONLY IN MY DREAM!
AH! IT WON'T BUDGE!
RATTLE
OH, THE FEMALE MITSU-BAYASHI MOVED.
YOU HAVE TO DO SOMETHING, HIRUKO!
RATTLE
SEE! I CAN'T GET IN!
RATTLE

BECAUSE OF MY CHAUVINISTIC FATHER, THE MEN'S BATH IS MORE LUXURIOUS THAN THE WOMEN'S BATH!
I WANT TO BATHE IN THE MEN'S BATH!
I'M ALWAYS WANTED TO TRY IT!
IT DIDN'T MATTER IF I WAS HIS OWN CHILD, THE MEN'S BATH WAS OFF LIMITS TO ANY FEMALE. IT'S BEEN INGRAINED IN ME SO MUCH THAT I CAN'T DISOBEY...
MY FATHER DISCRIMINATES AGAINST WOMEN.
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
...
JUST BECAUSE YOU TOOK A BATH IN THERE DOESN'T REALLY MAKE YOU A MAN... ANYWAYS, COULDN'T YOU DO IT IN REALITY?


SO YOU'RE SAYING THAT WE HAVE TO OPEN IT TOGETHER, RIGHT?
HEY, GIRL! OPEN IT ON THREE!
ONE, TWO, THREE!
RATTLE

HMM. YOU MAY BE TWO DIFFERENT BODIES IN YOUR DREAM, BUT YOU'RE STILL ONLY ONE PERSON.
PERHAPS YOU HAVE TO WORK TOGETHER, MOVING IN SYNC TO ACHIEVE WHAT YOU WANT.
YOU KNOW, FOR A PERSON WHO DREAMED OF BECOMING A BOY, I FIND IT ODD THAT THERE'S THIS FEMININE VERSION OF YOU.
...THAT IN THE BOTTOM OF YOUR HEART, YOU WANT TO BE A PROPER MISS LIKE HER TOO?
?!
COULD IT BE...
5
10
6
2
HEH... SHE'S CONFUSED.
HUH?
ME?
Baffled

AGH! THAT DIDN'T WORK! C'MON, WORK WITH ME HERE, YOU SLOWPOKE!
I JUST WANT TO GET INTO THE BATH! THAT'S WHY I HATE GIRLS!
CLANG
YOU STUPID GIRL!
THUMP
THUMP
ENTER THE BATH
I'LL WRITE DOWN ON A PIECE OF PAPER WHAT I WANT TO DO SO THAT IT'S CLEAR.
NOW I'LL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL TOMORROW'S DREAM.
CLATTER
TCH!
HEY, SHE RAN OFF.
IT'LL TAKE FOREVER AT THIS RATE...
WE HAVE TO BE IN SYNC...
I KNOW!
I SEE. SO THIS WAY YOU CAN WORK TOGETHER FOR A COMMON GOAL, INCREASING YOUR ODDS.


湯槽に入る
※ENTER THE BATH.
WOMEN
TIME TO WAKE UP.

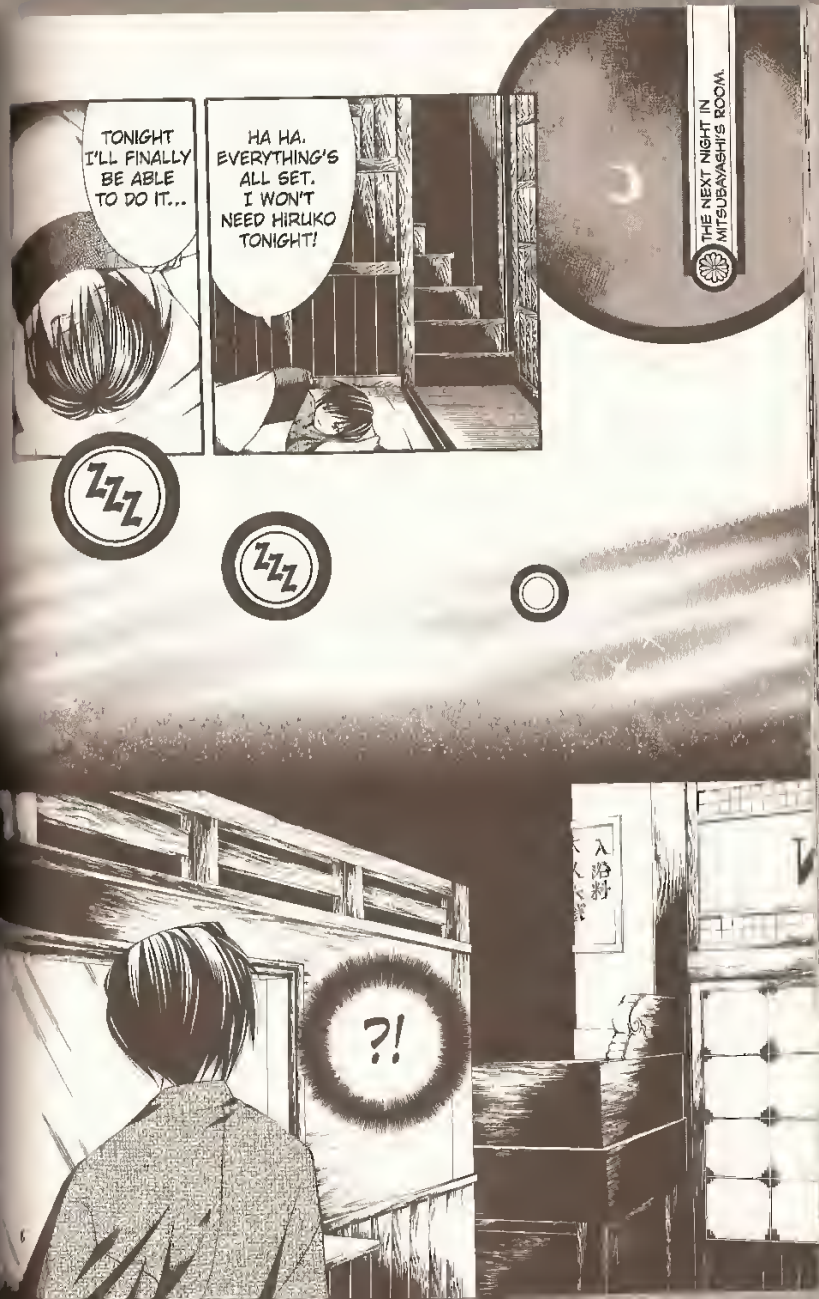
HIRUKO, PUT THIS BETWEEN US.
THAT'S RIGHT! SINCE WE'RE REALLY ONE PERSON, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO THINK THE SAME THING.

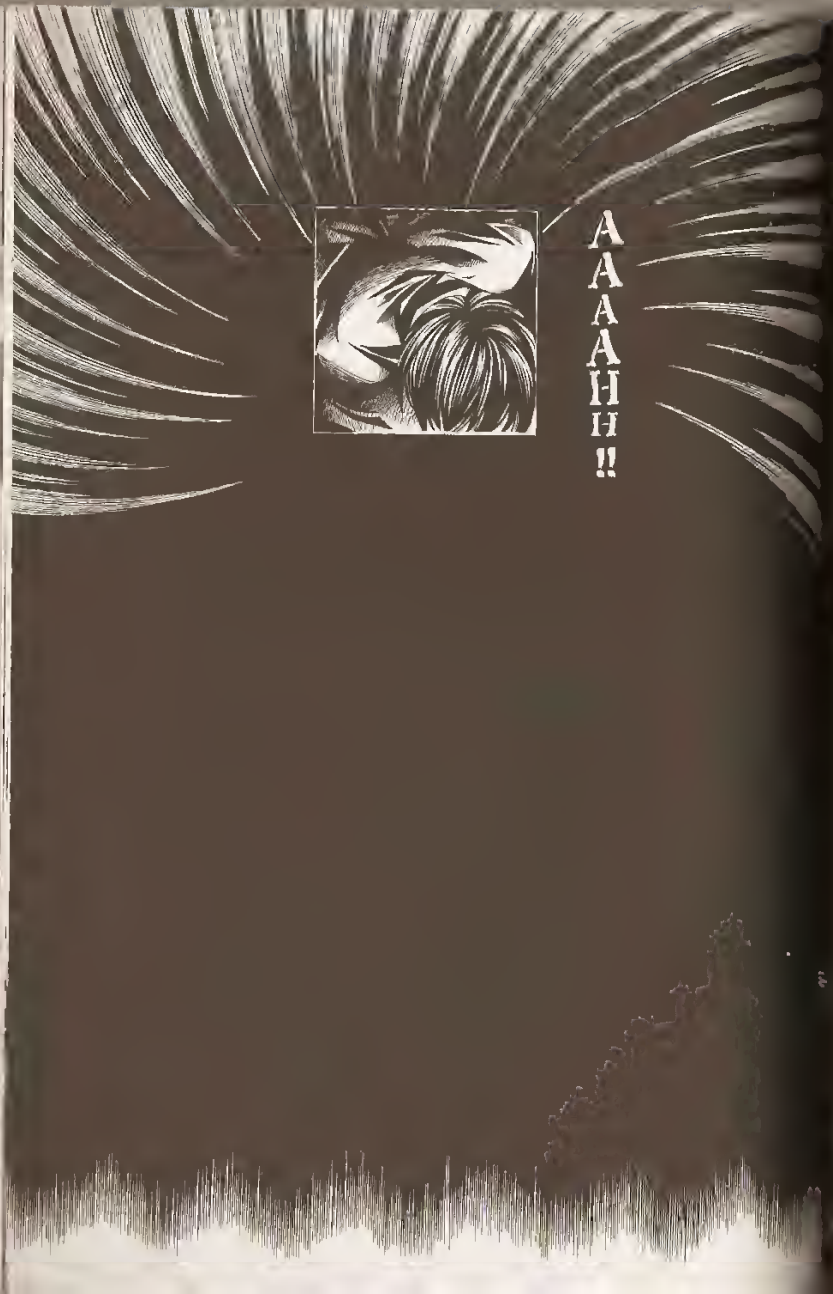
THIS JUST MIGHT WORK.

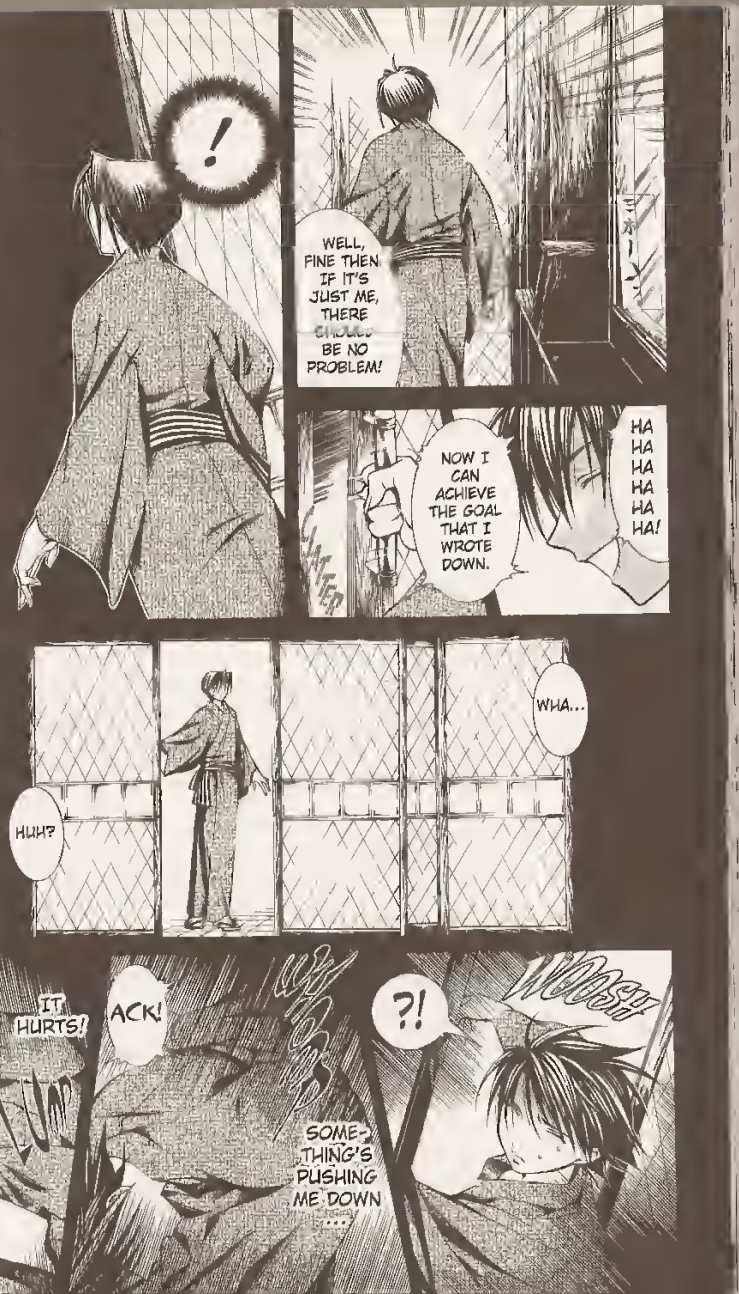
湯槽に入る
※ENTER THE BATH.

YES! TOMORROW, SHE AND I WILL...
TUG
...BE TOGETHER ON THE RIGHT PATH!

COULD IT BE BECAUSE SHE RAN OUT LAST NIGHT...?
IT'S... GONE...
THE WOMEN'S BATH...
FLUTTER
FLUTTER
SMACK
HA HA... DOES THIS MEAN I NEVER WANTED TO BE A GIRL?
THAT'S RIGHT, THE WOMEN'S SIDE DISAPPEARED.
THE PAPER'S CUT IN HALF...
THUMP


THE NEXT NIGHT IN MITSUBAYASHI'S ROOM.
TONIGHT I'LL FINALLY BE ABLE TO DO IT...
HA HA. EVERYTHING'S ALL SET. I WON'T NEED HIRUKO TONIGHT!
ZZZ
ZZZ
?!


AAAAHH!!

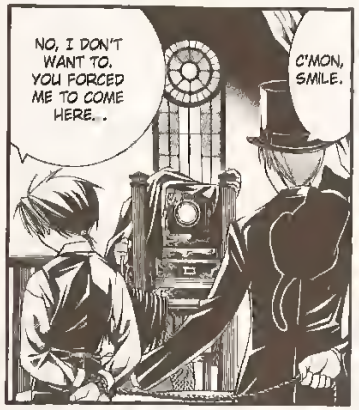

!
WELL, FINE THEN. IF IT'S JUST ME, THERE SHOULD BE NO PROBLEM!
NOW I CAN ACHIEVE THE GOAL THAT I WROTE DOWN.
HA HA HA HA HA!
HUH?
WHA...
?!
WOOSH
SOME-THING'S PUSHING ME DOWN ...
ACK!
IT HURTS!
GH!

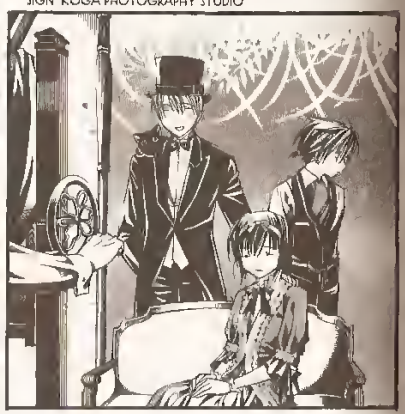
湯槽ノ中ヘ
※ENTER THE BATH
THE ONE THAT SAID, "ENTER THE BATH"?
THAT'S RIGHT.
I PUT MYSELF UNDER A SPELL SO THAT I WOULD FOLLOW WHATEVER THE INSTRUCTIONS WERE ON THE PAPER TO MAKE MY WISH COME TRUE.
BUT...
THE PAPER THAT I WROTE MY DESIRE ON... BECAUSE THE WOMAN'S SIDE DISAPPEARED...
...THE REMAINING HALF FELL AGAINST THE MIRROR.
I DIDN'T KNOW MYSELF AT FIRST... BUT WHEN I WOKE UP, I FIGURED IT OUT...
WHEN THAT HALF OF THE PAPER REFLECTED IN THE MIRROR, THE MEANING HAD CHANGED ENTIRELY...!

THE NEXT DAY AT THE SILVER STAR TEA HOUSE
HIFUMI MISUMI!
GATE
MI... MITSU-BAYASHI?! WHY ARE YOU DRESSED LIKE THAT?!
SHUT UP! I CAN'T TAKE THAT AWFUL DREAM ANYMORE! JUST GIVE IT HERE!
YOU MEAN THE KEY TO THE LOCKER?
TELL ME WHY.
YOU HAVE TO GIVE ME BACK THAT KEY! NOW!

"MITSU-BAYASHI TO GO TO THE CROSSED OUT 1."
三ホーメ。
CREAK
CREAK
AND IT CAME TRUE. I FOLLOWED THE INSTRUC-TIONS AND GOT SQUISHED INTO THAT TINY LOCKER...
OH...
SINCE I HAD PUT A LOCK ON IT IN REALITY, IT WAS ALSO LOCKED IN MY DREAM. THAT'S WHY I NEED THE KEY. OTHERWISE, I'LL BE TRAPPED FOREVER...
UHH!
THIS IS ALL BECAUSE I WANTED TO BE A BOY...!
SO THAT'S WHY YOU'RE DRESSED LIKE THAT. BUT WHAT ABOUT YOUR NIGHTMARE ABOUT BATHING IN THE MEN'S BATH...
THAT'S WHY I NEED THE KEY!
IT LOOKS LIKE THIS NIGHT-MARE MADE HER REALIZE WHICH GENDER SHE REALLY WANTED TO BE.
AAGH! I DON'T EVER WANT TO SEE SUCH A HORRIBLE NIGHTMARE AGAIN!
I'M SORRY I EVER WANTED TO BE A BOY!
I'LL BE A PROPER LADY FROM NOW ON...!
PERHAPS DEEP DOWN, MITSUBAYASHI WANTED IT THAT WAY...

The Forty-Eighth Night: Photo

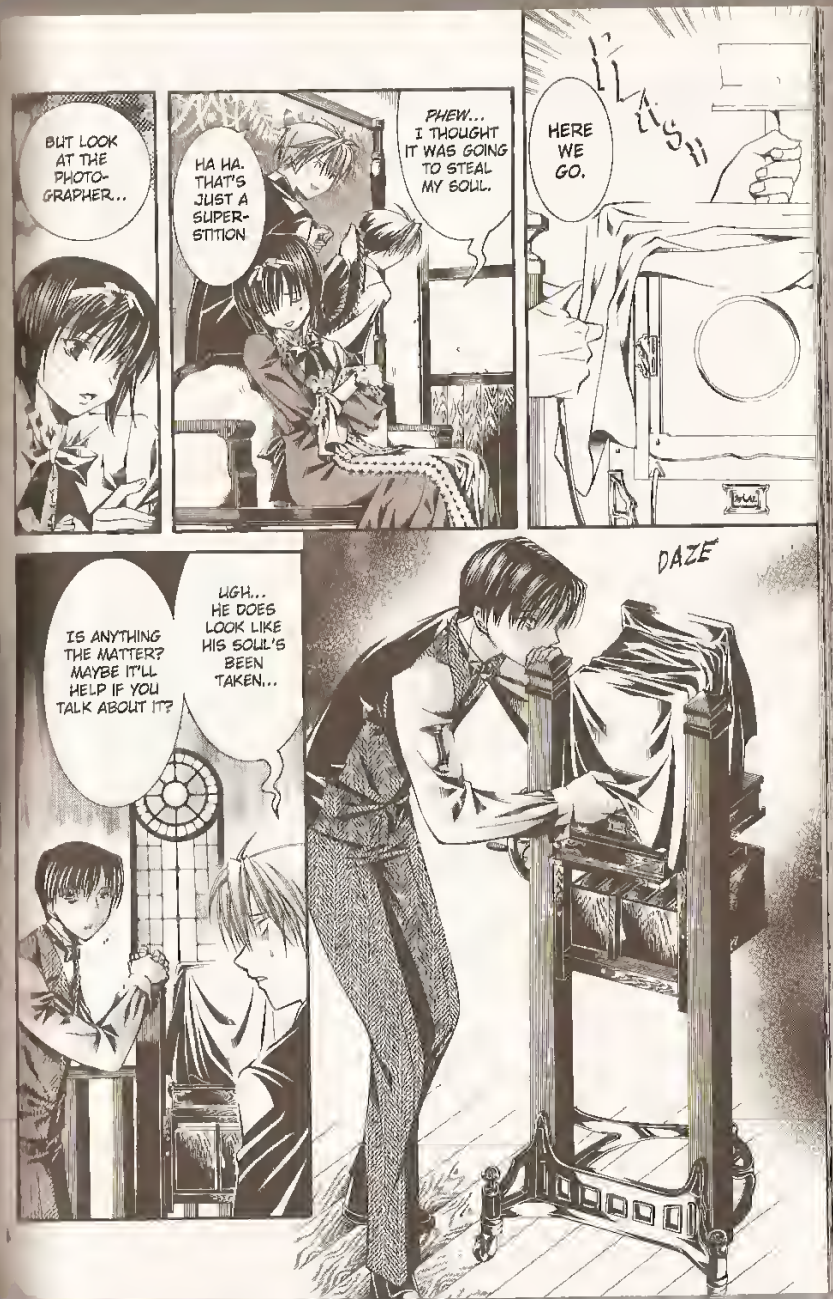


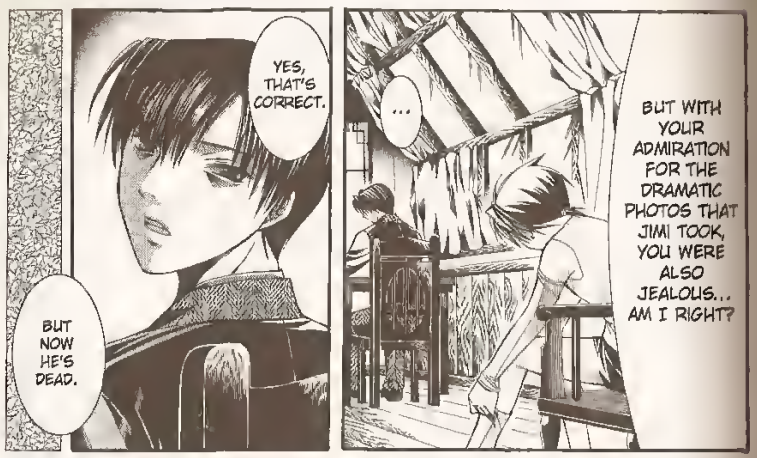


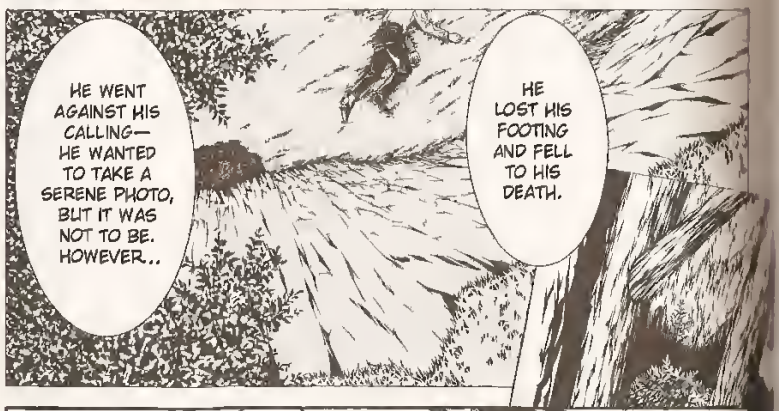
LIAR. YOU JUST WANTED A PHOTO OF YOU AND MIZUKI TOGETHER BUT WERE TOO EMBARRASSED TO ASK.
HEY, THIS IS FOR YOUR SAKE. YOU MAY LIVE A LONG, MISERABLE LIFE SINCE YOU'RE A BAKU, BUT MIZUKI AND I AREN'T GOING TO BE AROUND FOREVER. I WANTED TO GIVE YOU SOMETHING TO REMEMBER US BY.
ULP!

THAT'S WHY I PUT A RIBBON IN MY HAIR! DIDN'T YOU NOTICE?!
Jeez - Why don't you just remove the lock altogether? There are other solutions, you know.
YO4!
THAT HURTS! I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO BE A PROPER LADY! YOU SHOULD TRY AND BE MORE LIKE MIZUKI!
Oh my...

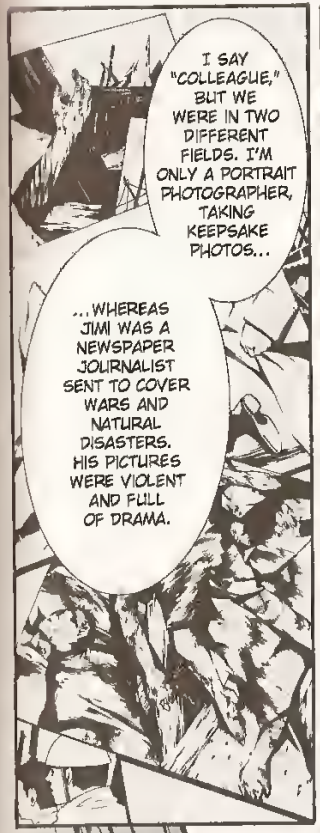
AH. I'M SORRY... I HAVEN'T BEEN SLEEPING WELL...
ALL BECAUSE OF THAT PHOTO...
YES, IT'S A PHOTO OF A GIRL WHO HUNG HERSELF.
A GIRL'S LEGS.. A ROPE.. IS THIS—?!


BUT LOOK AT THE PHOTO-GRAPHER...
HA HA. THAT'S JUST A SUPER-STITION
PHEW... I THOUGHT IT WAS GOING TO STEAL MY SOUL.
HERE WE GO.
FLASH
IS ANYTHING THE MATTER? MAYBE IT'LL HELP IF YOU TALK ABOUT IT?
UGH... HE DOES LOOK LIKE HIS SOUL'S BEEN TAKEN...
DAZE

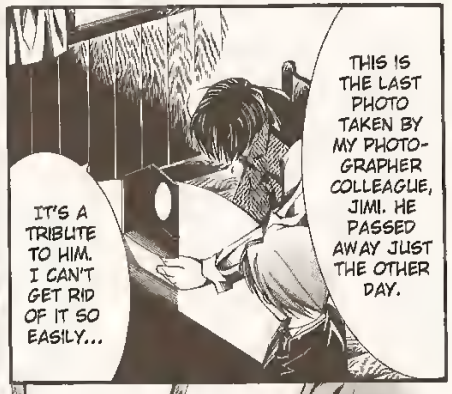

YES, THAT'S CORRECT.
BUT NOW HE'S DEAD.
...
BUT WITH YOUR ADMIRATION FOR THE DRAMATIC PHOTOS THAT JIMI TOOK, YOU WERE ALSO JEALOUS... AM I RIGHT?


HE WENT AGAINST HIS CALLING— HE WANTED TO TAKE A SERENE PHOTO, BUT IT WAS NOT TO BE. HOWEVER..
HE LOST HIS FOOTING AND FELL TO HIS DEATH.

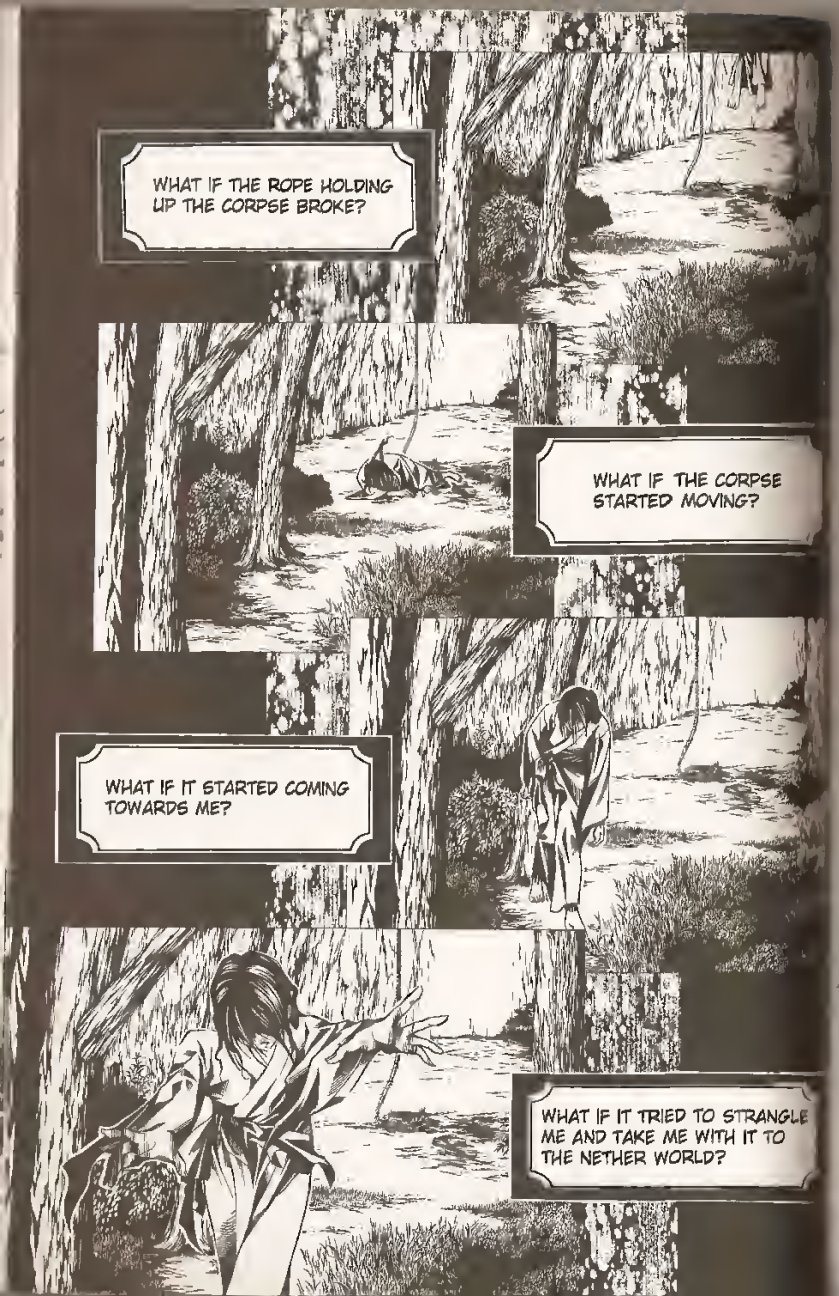
I ENVY HIS GENIUS!
EVEN UP TO HIS DYING MOMENT HE WAS ABLE TO TAKE A DRAMATIC PHOTO OF A HANGING!


I SAY "COLLEAGUE," BUT WE WERE IN TWO DIFFERENT FIELDS. I'M ONLY A PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHER, TAKING KEEPSAKE PHOTOS...
...WHEREAS JIMI WAS A NEWSPAPER JOURNALIST SENT TO COVER WARS AND NATURAL DISASTERS. HIS PICTURES WERE VIOLENT AND FULL OF DRAMA.

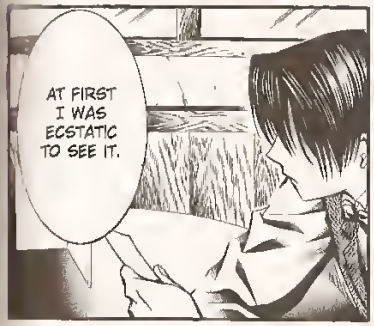
IDIOT! DON'T KEEP SUCH MORBID PHOTOS! THROW IT AWAY!
I CAN'T!

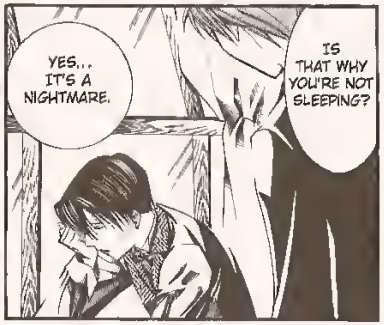

THIS IS THE LAST PHOTO TAKEN BY MY PHOTO-GRAPHER COLLEAGUE, JIMI. HE PASSED AWAY JUST THE OTHER DAY.
IT'S A TRIBUTE TO HIM. I CAN'T GET RID OF IT SO EASILY...

BUT BECAUSE OF MY POOR HEALTH AND MY FATHER DYING I HAD TO TAKE OVER THIS STUDIO
TRUTHFULLY, I WANTED TO TAKE EXCITING PHOTOS LIKE JIMI...

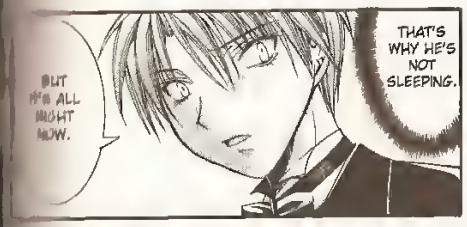

WHAT IF THE ROPE HOLDING UP THE CORPSE BROKE?
WHAT IF THE CORPSE STARTED MOVING?
WHAT IF IT STARTED COMING TOWARDS ME?
WHAT IF IT TRIED TO STRANGLE ME AND TAKE ME WITH IT TO THE NETHER WORLD?

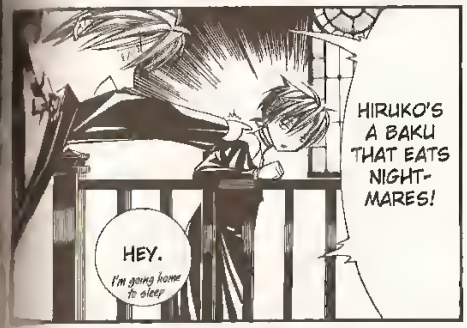
HA! AND NOW I STARTED HAVING A DREAM ABOUT IT...
I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO TAKE A PICTURE LIKE THIS. IT SYMBOLIZES EVERYTHING I'VE LONGED FOR, SO I CAN'T GET RID OF IT.

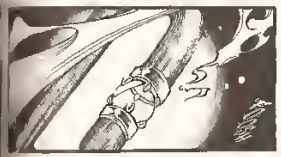

AT FIRST I WAS ECSTATIC TO SEE IT.


YES... IT'S A NIGHTMARE.
IS THAT WHY YOU'RE NOT SLEEPING?

THERE IS A PHOTO BEING PROJECTED IN MY DREAM.
I BECAME MORE SCARED EVERY NIGHT AND STARTED IMAGINING THESE HORRIBLE THOUGHTS.
BUT IT WAS A CORPSE, SO...

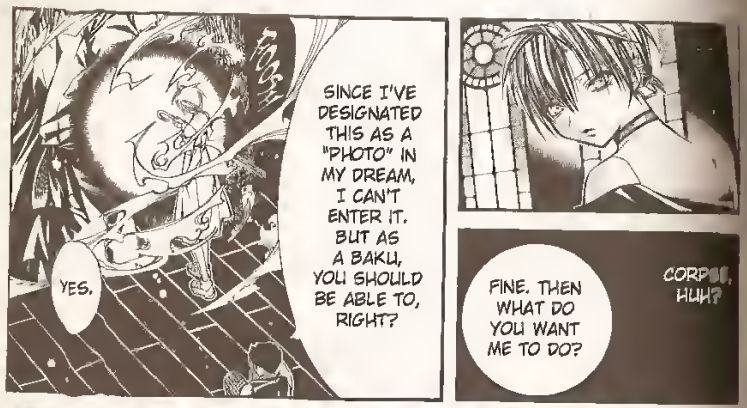




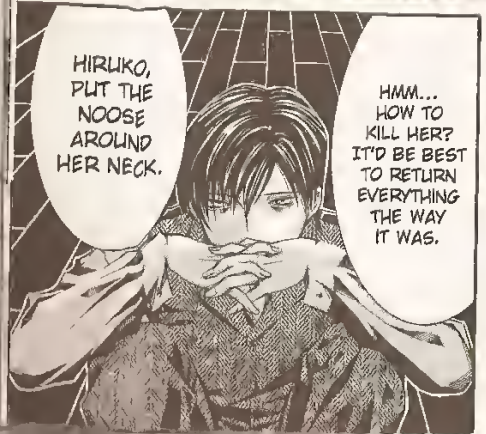


WELL... I AM A LITTLE CURIOUS.

SHE'S GOT A KNIFE! SHE DIDN'T HAVE THAT BEFORE!
PHEW! I'M SAVED. OH!
SHE'S COME RIGHT UP TO YOU. LUCKILY, IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE THIS IS YOUR LAST DREAM.
I SEE...
OR, DO YOU THINK THAT SHE'LL USE THE KNIFE TO BREAK OUT OF THE PHOTO? YOUR ANXIETY IS CAUSING YOU TO DREAM OF THE PHOTO LIKE THIS.
ARE YOU NAIVELY HOPING THAT SHE WON'T BE ABLE TO GET YOU BECAUSE SHE'S IN A PHOTO?
THERE'S ALSO A PART OF ME THAT DOESN'T WANT TO STOP IT.
BUT...
I WOULD IF I COULD!
KOGA, IF YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GET RID OF THE PHOTO, THEN YOU SHOULD STOP MAKING YOUR NIGHTMARE WORSE WITH YOUR IMAGINATION..
THAT'S WHY HIS THOUGHTS HAVE BECOME REAL.

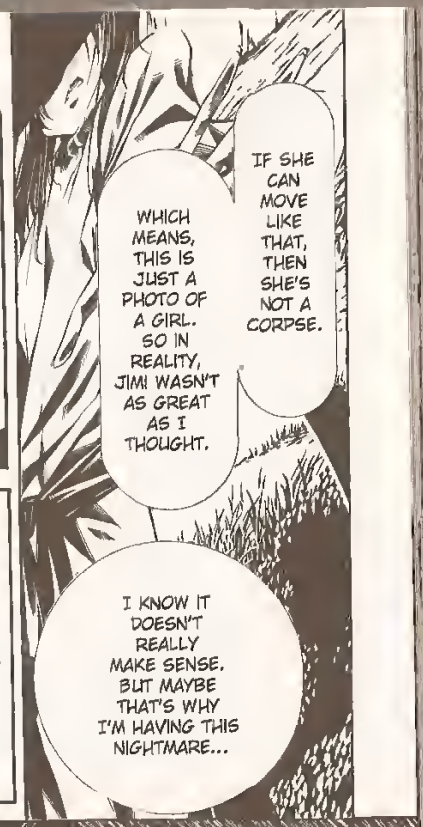

SINCE I'VE DESIGNATED THIS AS A "PHOTO" IN MY DREAM, I CAN'T ENTER IT. BUT AS A BAKU, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO, RIGHT?
YES.

FINE. THEN WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO?
CORPSE, HUH?


HMM... HOW TO KILL HER? IT'D BE BEST TO RETURN EVERYTHING THE WAY IT WAS.
HIRUKO, PUT THE NOOSE AROUND HER NECK.

TAKE THE WEAPON FROM HER.
AND?

I SEE. I CAN SYMPATHIZE WITH THAT, BUT SHE WILL STRANGLE YOU IN YOUR NEXT DREAM.
EXACTLY! THEN WHY DON'T WE TRY THIS?

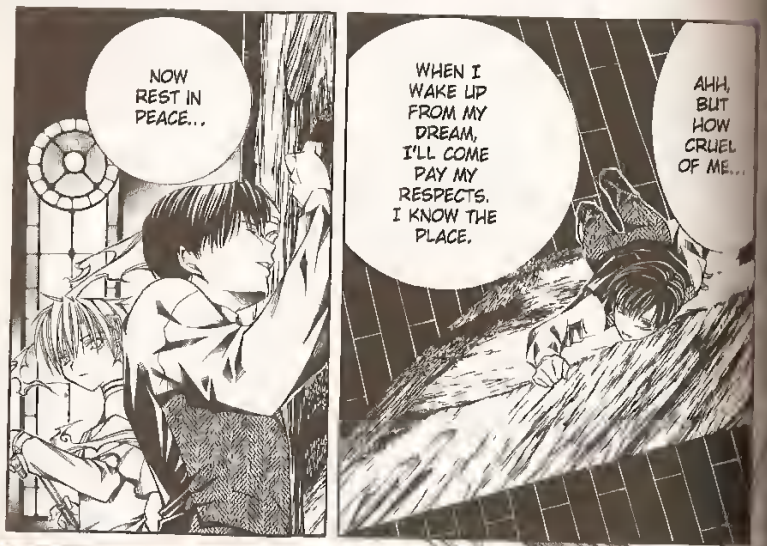

IF SHE CAN MOVE LIKE THAT, THEN SHE'S NOT A CORPSE.
WHICH MEANS, THIS IS JUST A PHOTO OF A GIRL. SO IN REALITY, JIM! WASN'T AS GREAT AS I THOUGHT.
I KNOW IT DOESN'T REALLY MAKE SENSE, BUT MAYBE THAT'S WHY I'M HAVING THIS NIGHTMARE...

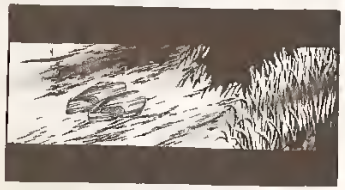
I WANT YOU TO KILL HER FOR GOOD!

YES... THAT'S IT. THE PHOTO WILL BECOME MY WORK IN THE DREAM. THE PERFECT PICTURE I'VE ALWAYS DREAMED OF!
IF I CAUSE HER DEATH, THEN THE CORPSE IS A PRODUCT OF MY WORK. I WON'T HAVE TO FEAR IT ANYMORE.

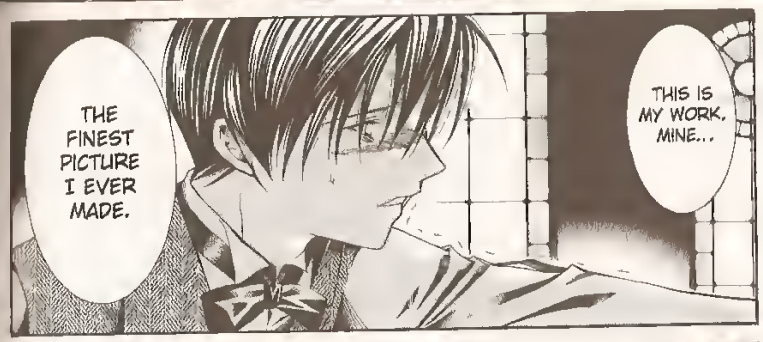
KR
KR
KR
OH ...!
SHE'S DEAD.

DRAG
OKAY.
DRAG

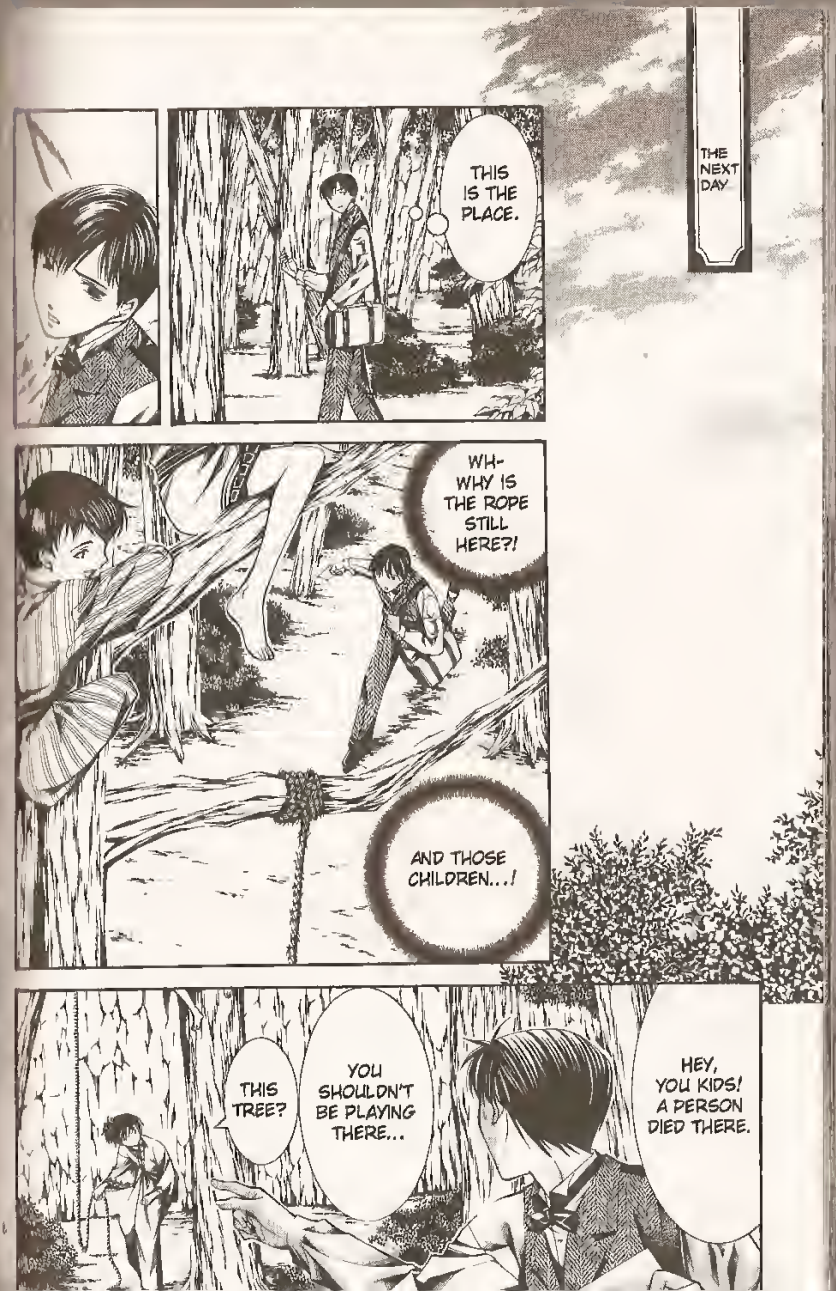




TIME TO WAKE UP.

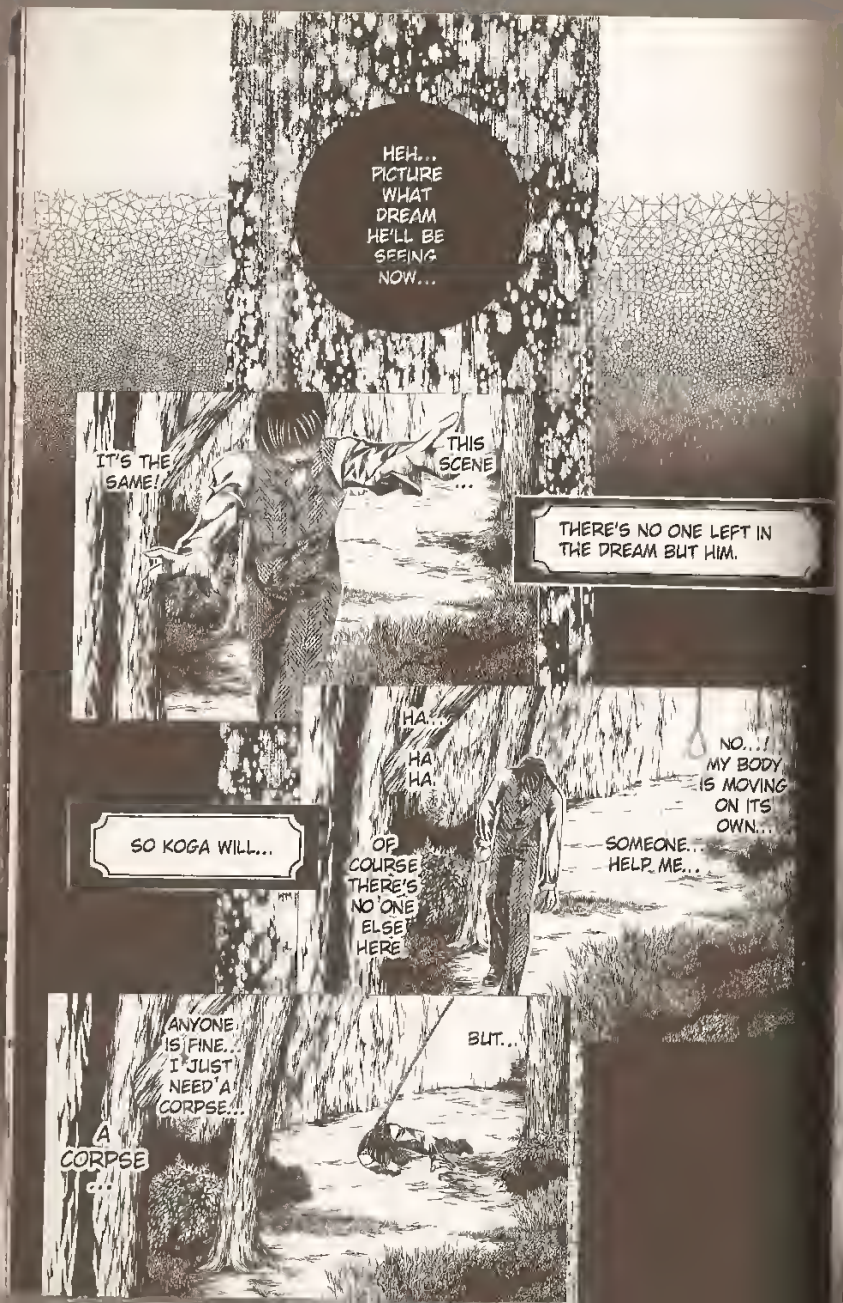


NO ONE DIED HERE.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
WE ALWAYS PLAY HERE.
SEE? WE USE THE ROPE TO CLIMB UP THE TREE.
?!


THE NEXT DAY
THIS IS THE PLACE.
WH-WHY IS THE ROPE STILL HERE?!
AND THOSE CHILDREN...!
HEY, YOU KIDS! A PERSON DIED THERE.
YOU SHOULDN'T BE PLAYING THERE...
THIS TREE?

MY PERFECT PICTURE!
IN THAT CASE ...
THE CORPSE I CREATED ...
MY PICTURE ...
CHILD'S PLAY. THERE WAS NO CORPSE?
HA.. HA HA..
WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL TOO.
BUT A MAN DID DIE OVER BY THAT CLIFF...
NO! IT CAN'T BE!!
THAT'S RIGHT. ALL I NEED IS A CORPSE...
ANYONE WOULD DO. A CORPSE HANGING FROM THIS TREE...
A CORPSE ...
A PICTURE BETTER THAN JIMI'S...
What's the matter with him?
Who knows?

WAS IT ALL A MISUNDER-STANDING?!
THE LEGS WEREN'T FROM SOMEONE WHO HUNG THEMSELF?!
HEE
HEE


HEH... PICTURE WHAT DREAM HE'LL BE SEEING NOW...
IT'S THE SAME!
THIS SCENE...
THERE'S NO ONE LEFT IN THE DREAM BUT HIM.
SO KOGA WILL...
HA...
HA HA HA.
OF COURSE THERE'S NO ONE ELSE HERE
NO...! MY BODY IS MOVING ON ITS OWN...
SOMEONE... HELP ME...
ANYONE IS FINE... I JUST NEED A CORPSE...
BUT...
A CORPSE...

I DON'T THINK THAT WAS EVER A CORPSE.
WHAT?
Our photo turned out nice.
TO GO AND CREATE A CORPSE IN HIS DREAM BECAUSE HE WAS ENRAPTURED BY THAT SHOCKING PHOTO.
HE WAS WEIRD.
AND WITH JIMI'S LAST PHOTO SO AMAZING.
NO.
HE MUST HAVE FELT REALLY INFERIOR TO HIS FRIEND...
BUT HIS JEALOUSY OF JIMI AND HIS DESIRE TO CREATE A SHOCKING PHOTO WILL STILL EXIST. HIS OBSESSION WON'T BE SATED UNTIL HE FINDS A NEW CORPSE...
YES... THE CORPSE WILL DISAPPEAR FROM HIS DREAM.
WOULD A PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER HAVE TAKEN SUCH A BAD PHOTO OF A CORPSE? THE COMPOSITION IS BAD.
IT COULD POSSIBLY BE A PICTURE THAT JIMI TOOK ACCIDENTALLY WHEN HE FELL, BUT IF IT WASN'T...
BUT IF THERE WAS NEVER ANY CORPSE, THEN THERE WAS NO POINT TO HIS DREAM. IF HE REALIZES THAT...
RIGHT... YOU ONLY SEE HER FEET.

NIGHTMARE INSPECTOR 7: END

感謝

THANK YOU!

♦ A big thank you to
My editor Yuki Saeki
Editor-in-chief
Everyone that was involved with making this book <Everyone at Square Enix>

♦ My lovely assistants:
Katsumi Arai
Takecchi
MOAI

♦ My special friends & assistants:
Wan wan Shiro
NEEMA
Thank you from the bottom of my heart!

No meaning behind this

The next few pages are the usual guest pages. Shiro did the alternative telling of the manga and also did the tag team manga (where we take turns drawing a panel) with NEEMA and myself.

Page 175 is a collaborative effort by the three of us. We each drew different parts of the bodies, which had disastrous results.

後書キ

AFTER-WORD

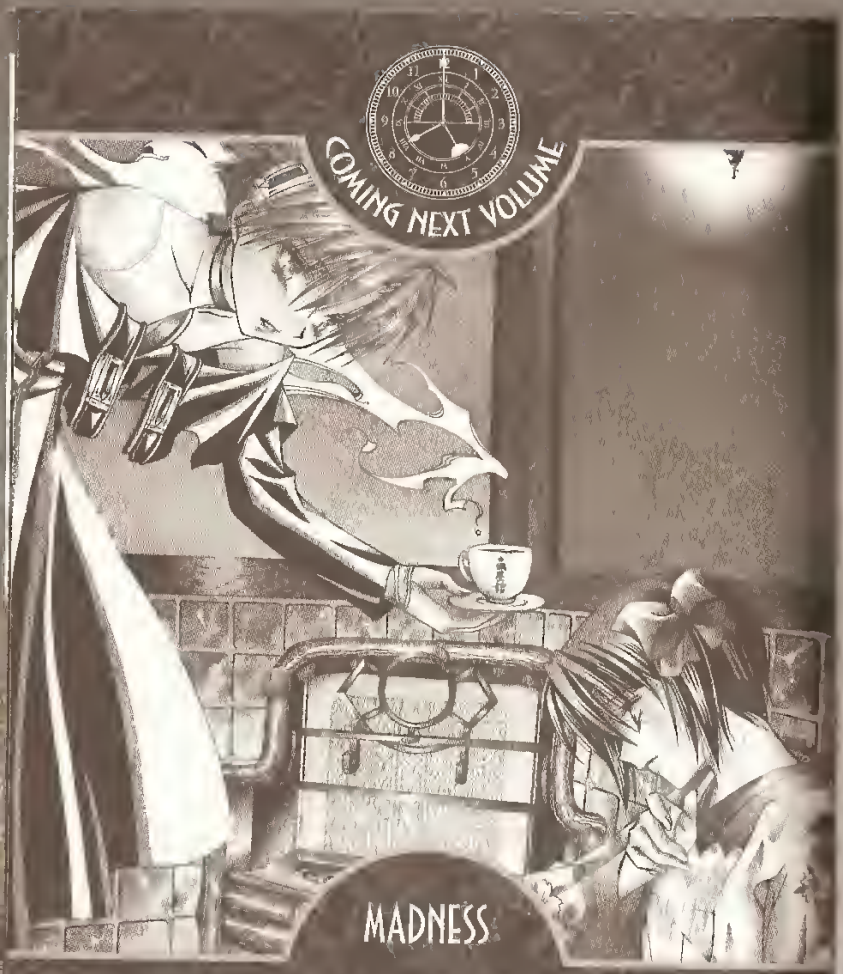
Hello, it's Shin Mashiba! We're at volume seven, thanks to you! I still have much to improve, but thanks very much for buying it!

I want to thank my editor Yuki Saeki and everyone involved for helping me thus far.

TAG TEAM MANGA

THE HALF NIGHT: AN ARIA BEYOND DEATH

MY PERFECT PICTURE!
IN THAT CASE ...
THE CORPSE I CREATED ...
MY PICTURE ...
WHAT? THERE'S NO TOILET HERE?
HA... HA HA...
WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL TOO.
THERE'RE NO BATHROOMS AROUND HERE, SO ONE GUY HAD SOME TROUBLE...
NO! IT CAN'T BE!!
THAT'S RIGHT. ALL I NEED IS SOME PAPER...
PLEASE... ANYBODY! PAPER... SOME TOILET PAPER.
I CAN'T HOLD IT...
FIVE SECONDS BEFORE DISCHARGE.
THE END
AT LEAST, GIVE ME SOME PRIVACY...
POOT
What's the matter with him?
Who knows
MUMBLE



Dreams on the menu in this volume: a childhood friendship that has lost its innocence, Kairi caught up in his own delusion, a sinister trap set for a Baku, an inn with deadly secrets, a sea of drowned memories, a mother's forgotten item, a man confined to an elevator, and Hifumi's family affairs.

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YUMEKUI KENBUN

NIGHTMARE INSPECTOR

YUMEKUI KENBUN: NIGHTMARE INSPECTOR
VOL. 7
The VIZ Media Edition

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SHIN MASHIBA

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SHIN MASHIBA

I still don't know much about Hifumi and Shima.

Shin Mashiba's first manga, *Yumekui Kenbun* (Nightmare Inspector), premiered in *Monthly Stencil*, a shojo magazine, in December 2001 and was then serialized in *Monthly G Fantasy* from 2003 to 2007. Mashiba-san's own nightmares include being forced to eat 50 living slugs and being chased by time.